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BIHAR YOGA®

Volume II

Early Teachings of Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India

Early Teachings of
Swami Satyananda
Saraswati
Volume II



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Early Teachings of Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Volume II

*These lectures were delivered by Swami Satyananda Saraswati
between 1962 and 1977 in various cities in India
and during his All-India tour in early 1979.*



Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India

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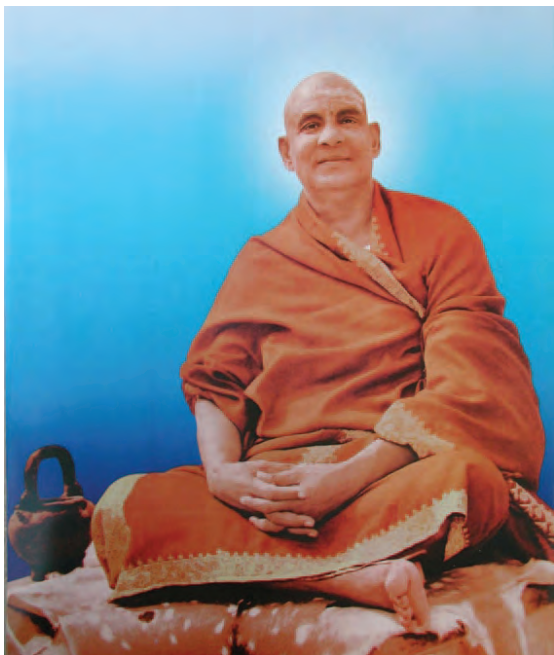
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Dedication

*In humility we offer this dedication to
Swami Sivananda Saraswati, who initiated
Swami Satyananda Saraswati into the secrets of yoga.*

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1

The Science and Practice of Swara Yoga

Bombay, 1962

The most natural activity of man is the act of breathing. Each one of us breathes regularly by day as well as by night. This process of breathing appears to be very ordinary, but for the yogi, it is most important and full of meaning.

Generally it is the belief that we breathe in equal proportion through both nostrils, but this is not so. Normally we breathe more through one nostril and less through the other, and then a changeover takes place.

Medical science has not thrown much light on this matter, but in India there is the ancient tradition of swara yoga. Astrology is incomplete without the knowledge of the swaras. He who has fully realized swara yoga is regarded as the greatest of yogis. The target of self-realization has to be hit by shooting the arrow of the mind drawn on the bow of the breath. From the spiritual standpoint, *prana* or life breath is not only the preserver of the physical body; it opens the way to higher life.

Swara means the life breath that is incessantly passing through the nostrils. It is the breath flowing through the left and the right nostrils. These are related with *ida* and *pingala nadis*, which represent the lunar and solar forces. The breath in the right nostril is called the *surya swara* and the breath in the left nostril is called the *chandra swara*.

How long does the breath flow in the right nostril and how long in the left nostril?

When there is more flowing of air through the right nostril, it should be taken that the surya swara is flowing. If more through the left nostril, then the chandra swara is flowing. The flow of breath in the nostrils changes every sixty to ninety minutes. This is the swara cycle. For this period of time surya swara flows, and then for the sixty to ninety minutes chandra swara flows. The time of changeover is called the transition period. At this time the breath flows through both nostrils equally and *sushumna* or *shoonya swara* is said to be functioning.

According to the swara shastra, the undertaking of any auspicious work meets with success if it is done when the left nostril or chandra swara is flowing. In the same way, if any particularly difficult work is to be undertaken, it should be done when the right nostril or surya swara flows. Any work commenced when the sushumna or shoonya swara flows tends to be unsuccessful. For this reason, it is never considered desirable to undertake any worldly activity when sushumna flows. Of course, there is no harm in continuing work that is already in progress, but no new activity should be commenced.

Which types of activities should be performed during the flow of chandra swara?

When chandra swara flows, steady and good work should be commenced. All auspicious deeds can be carried out, for example, going on pilgrimage, giving alms, a marriage ceremony, commencing studies, sacrifices and seeking friends, should be done at this time. Actions like entering a new order of life, seeking initiation, installing an image of God, seeking mantra siddhi, seeking salvation, performing guru pooja, bringing an animal into the house, digging wells and tanks, constructing buildings, saving money, meeting with friends, meeting one's superior, entering a city or village, gathering things like fuel, practising arts like

music and dancing, and confiding some matter to one's superior, are things which meet with success if chandra swara is flowing. Similarly, wearing new clothes, ornaments, applying tilak, taking of divine herbs, diagnosis of diseases, or any substantial undertaking should be commenced when this swara flows.

Which types of activities are successful during the flow of surya swara?

When the right nostril flows, one should undertake difficult work or work which is not easily successful. When surya swara dominates, the body has more heat and energy. Therefore, such work as teaching, studying difficult subjects, embarking upon a ship, learning the use of weapons, going over a fort or a mountain, riding a horse or an elephant, learning the handling of machinery, crossing a river, overcoming an enemy, and taking up arms should be undertaken. Difficult sadhanas should be practised when surya nadi flows. For example, practising the veeramantra, making yantras, tantric sadhanas like marana, mohana, uchchatana, stambhana, for controlling and summoning evil spirits, yakshinis, vetals, can be carried out when this swara flows.

Physical exercises, taking of medicines, bathing, tilling fields, drinking wine, eating food, physical labour, lending and borrowing money, removing evil spirits, all these works should be done when surya nadi flows. If one wants to overcome someone stronger than oneself and success is difficult to achieve, that work should be undertaken when this swara is flowing. If some work has to be done in a nearby place, one should start it when the surya swara flows. If one wants to undertake a journey and the surya swara is flowing, one should place the right foot first and start on the journey. In the evening, if the surya nadi does not flow and the opposite nadi flows against its scheduled time, then one should give up the work, because it will not succeed. Entering a house when surya nadi flows is deemed auspicious.

Which type of work can be done during the flow of shoonya swara?

Dangerous works should be done when sushumna or shoonya swara flows. Good works bring no success if they are undertaken when the shoonya swara flows. In the swara shastra, sushumna is described as the *dushta nadi*, the wicked nadi. Only two things are considered fit to be undertaken then, either wicked or fierce deeds, or yoga practice. Therefore, when sushumna flows, one must commence actions that lead to salvation. This is the best time for actions calculated to help break the bondage of the world, sundering the fetters of maya, and conquering lust, anger, infatuation, greed, and so on, and overcoming enemies.

In order to succeed in the practices of yoga it is essential to have sushumna flowing. But if good works or works for worldly success are undertaken at this time, then the results are contrary. The time for the flow of sushumna is the period of transition between the two nadis. At this moment one should not worry about anything. Undertaking journeys when sushumna flows is likely to cause trouble, serious affliction or even death may occur.

Is it important to identify the predominant element?

Along with the knowledge of swara, one has to reflect on the elements, *tattwas*, also. Some elements are auspicious and some are inauspicious. The elements are five in number: earth, water, fire, air and ether. By contemplation on the elements, it can be known which is predominant. Both the swara and the elements are usually studied side by side. Knowledge of the swara would be incomplete without the reflection of the tattwa. Knowledge of the tattwa helps in determining the exact result of each action.

What is the swara vijnana and how is it related to the Vedas?

In the swara shastras, the swara has been considered to be the form of the soul, the *atma*. Other references state that the swara represents all the Vedas and the scriptures. What

do these statements signify and why has such an importance been given to the swara? This requires reflection. The life energy derives its movement through the medium of the swara. It is the life energy or the prana, the breath, which activates all our functions for knowledge or work in any field. A person who relies completely on the strength of this life energy is able to make this insentient and gross body energized, active and knowledgeable.

The term *veda* means to know. The entire storehouse of knowledge is concealed within our being, but we have no instruments or methods to bring it out. The mind, the intellect, the chitta and the senses are the instruments used for experiencing that all knowing Purusha. The extent to which these instruments possess the necessary power is the degree to which the internal being reflects its knowledge. Prana is the sustainer of all these elements. Prana again is the attribute of the Purusha. Swara means prana. That is why swara has been described as synonymous with the soul, the Brahman, the Vedas and the shastras. One can realize the full importance of the swara when one is ready to take up the study and practice of yoga.

What are the rewards of one who has perfected knowledge of swara?

According to the swara shastra, liberation is achieved by knowledge of the swara. One who knows how to distinguish the swaras becomes very happy. One who knows how the swara influences the pulse beats and the variations in its movements, is able to acquire wealth, fame and moksha. A swara yogi becomes omniscient. He is able to know past events as well as future ones. He is able to have progeny according to his desire, to win friends and conquer enemies.

Lord Shankara considered the knowledge of swara to be the best of all knowledge and the greatest of all the treasures. The Vedas, Vedanta, Shastras and Puranas are all included in the science of swara. All the activities of an individual, like waking, sleeping, eating and excretion depend upon the

functioning of the swara or the prana. Swara is the sustainer and supporter of the entire creation, and it is only through the swara that its destruction is determined. The entire universe depends upon swara.

Therefore, he alone is the yogi and the jnani who knows the science of swara, its different forms, its functions, its uses and its results. A study of swara yoga is extremely useful and leads to success and great accomplishments. The swara shastras go to the extent of saying that the goddess of prosperity, Lakshmi, follows the footsteps of one who has learned the science of swara, and wherever one goes, happiness and glory follow.

According to the observation of the sages, just as the syllable *Aum*, the brahmin and the Sun, are worshipped in the Vedas, even so the swara jnani is worshipped in this world. The person who knows the secrets of the three nadis; ida, pingala and sushumna, is a million times superior to anything in the world that brings happiness or joy. The sages regard the knowledge acquired through the person who knows the science of swara as so invaluable that it cannot be compensated for by paying of millions of coins.

Only a properly qualified student is able to attain perfection in this branch of knowledge, but it is useful for ordinary people as well. Any person with an open heart and simple faith can hear the inner voice and receive its message through the medium of this science. The inner voice will never give you false guidance. Make the swara your medium to acquaint yourself with this inner voice.

The swara itself becomes the indicator or the signal of events. If any individual, depending upon the swara, decided to do or not to do his everyday work, he would succeed to the extent of seventy-five percent. By applying himself towards those activities that are liable to be fulfilled, a person certainly obtains name, fame and happiness. By not undertaking the activities which are likely to be unsuccessful, a person is saved from many troubles, the wasting of time and money, distraction, restlessness, disappointment, internal conflicts and regrets.

2

Hypnotism: An Elementary Mental Hygiene

Bombay, 1962

Is hypnotism related to psychology?

Hypnotism is related to the science of psychology, and psychology is a part of spiritual science. Scholars today consider psychology to be a science given to us by the West. However, research which has been conducted into the science of the mind and soul in this country since ancient times has never been conducted elsewhere in the world. Whatever literature our ancients have created has been a result of their attempts to find the common denominator between inner consciousness and outer consciousness. Psychology is only the first step towards the attainment of the ultimate truth, while the spiritual knowledge of India has reached the highest truth.

The theories on which the science of hypnotism rests can be equated with the kindergarten stage of yoga sadhana. When a person becomes engrossed in the study of dhyana yoga and thoroughly grasps the technique of meditation, the science of psychology appears to be child's play. The yoga darshan of Patanjali consists of merely one hundred and ninety-five sutras, but an exposition of each sutra would easily fill a book. To the student of yoga, especially of raja yoga, who has learned the art of controlling the mind and fitting it on to the rocket of sadhana to realize the self, hypnotism or mesmerism provides nothing new to be known.

There are two types of sciences, objective and subjective. Some sciences are intended for the acquisition of knowledge of the external world. For instance, the scientists discovered atomic energy and now they are trying to find out in what fields of human life this energy can be used. This is called objective science. However, there are certain branches of knowledge which devote themselves to man's internal development. These are known as subjective sciences. According to the scriptures, the objective sciences are known as *para*, of this world, and the subjective sciences are called *apara*, or transcendental. Hypnotism, psychology, yoga, religion, ethics, and so on, are all subjective sciences directly concerned with man's inner development.

Is hypnotism a part of yoga?

Hypnotism, being a form of mental training, is a part of yoga. Hypnotism depends upon the power of the individual. Every individual is possessed of the power which is called *yoga shakti*, yogic power. Yogic power manifests itself as the power of love, action, energy and knowledge of the mind, the will and the self. Every individual is able to awaken this power within and also to transmit it to others. Everyone possesses this power within himself or herself to a greater or lesser degree, but some people develop this power by *sadhana* or personal effort while others do not.

Yet, whatever the power, it is the power of the soul. Some people are able to awaken this power by great efforts, while others have the advantage of possessing it naturally. The science of hypnotism is really the power of the soul. The study of yoga is devoted to the awakening of the power of the self which is technically described as the *kundalini shakti*. Practising in these matters is called *sadhana*. This study consists of the yogic practices in which man tries to awaken his latent powers. Thus hypnotism is not a new science.

The power which we use for hypnotism is *prana shakti*, the energy of the breath or the vital energy. Some scholars describe it as personal magnetism, nerve force, human

electricity, which are all indicative of that power. By his willpower, which is a small flow of his soul force, a person, duly trained, can influence another person who has had no opportunity of awakening his willpower. Man possesses this power within himself. It is not brought from outside. The body, the mind, the intellect, the chitta and the awareness of self are the instruments for that soul force to function.

In reality, the training of willpower means an increase in the thought power of the individual. Those whose thought power has more force are able to influence those whose power is not developed. It does not follow that a person with weak willpower is less educated or less literate. This power can be found even in illiterate persons and can be absent in an educated person. People sometimes believe that intellectuals possess more willpower and that due to greater intellectual knowledge they would not easily be hypnotized, but a powerful hypnotist can easily influence a learned person. This is a proven fact.

Can hypnotism be used to cure mental disease and illness?

With the help of hypnotism many defects in the human personality can be cured. A man can improve his life by correcting several mental errors. Psychological ailments can never be cured by means of drugs. Instead of being cured, many toxic elements enter into the system and cause damage at a later stage. Such types of mental diseases can be cured only by hypnotism. Many people are suffering from mental problems and allopathy has no remedy for them.

These days, the germs of diseases first enter the minds of educated persons. Therefore, the power to fight and resist germs does not merely lie in the white blood cell count but in the constituents of the mind. What then is the remedy to make the mental constituents strong? If the mental elements become strong, they will not let any harmful thought currents enter the mind.

Therefore, the mind should be trained so you can react to any given situation in the manner which you

choose. The mind should be active or inactive according to your suggestions. In order to achieve this, there are two methods. First, you train your mind yourself. Secondly, if you experience weakness within yourself, you should take the help of someone else.

Those who possess formidable willpower can correct themselves by autohypnosis, but those who are cowardly, who have no independence of thought, who have no high aim or goal in life, will never be able to remedy their defects or progress in sadhana. It will be very difficult for them to achieve success in any field of life. For such persons, the only way to advance is to take the help of someone else's thought power.

Can hypnotism strengthen one's willpower?

Those whose thought force is weak and whose self-confidence is low, generally suffer from disease and sorrow. Those who have great faith in their personality and who have firm belief in their irresistible strength, will never be the victims of disease. This power cannot be had from outside. On the contrary, you should awaken the latent power within you and make it function, thus proving your own self-confidence. The power is there within, but the faith required to bring it out is absent. Many events have occurred which prove that man possesses a marvellous force which is all powerful.

Hypnotism is a sadhana to make that force function. It has been said before that hypnotism is a method of self-discipline wherein our soul force or willpower is awakened with the help of some other agency. After bringing the subject into the hypnotic state, whatever healthy suggestions or commands are given, they are readily accepted by the subconscious mind and then translated into action.

What are the dimensions of consciousness?

Man's consciousness works on five planes. The first plane is the stage of wakefulness. In this state man remains

completely awake and works in the world with his ten sense organs. He is aware of the world and the body. Man remains awake without, but he is inwardly asleep. He is not aware of the knowledge of his internal consciousness.

The second state, which arises after hypnotism is practised, is the state of stupor. In this state, man is neither completely awake nor completely asleep. His consciousness is neither fully outside nor fully inside. In the state of stupor, man is neither conscious of his outward surroundings nor of internal happenings, but he is a little aware of both.

The third state is sleep. In this state, man is asleep externally and internally also. He has no awareness of sensory experiences or of dreams. In deep sleep there is complete ignorance. There is neither external nor internal consciousness. There is no awareness of internal or external happenings.

In the fourth stage, man is asleep in the external world, but he is awake inwardly. He is not conscious of the outer world, but he is awake internally and he sees dreams and impressions vividly.

Beyond all these is the fifth state where man is completely unconscious of the external world but is fully awake in his internal world. He has got full inner knowledge. This is a very high stage. Externally he is asleep but internally he is awake. This is the state of *samadhi*. There are some saints and yogis who remain wide awake externally as well as internally. They know their outside world as well as their inside one. This is called *sahaja samadhi*.

The state which is induced by hypnotism is called the state of stupor. This is the state wherein the subconscious mind remains active but the body is inert. In this state of half sleep, the mind remains very impressionable. Memory remains vivid and the intellect disappears for a time. The intelligence, creating doubts or raising right or wrong thoughts, becomes inactive. The subconscious mind merely hears and accepts the commands.

Is a person who is hypnotized actually asleep?

The subject under hypnotism never actually sleeps, because if he falls into deep sleep, he will not be able to execute the commands of the operator. When the subject acts according to the orders, he is half awake and half asleep. Further, hypnotism never succeeds in the case of a person who is not willing to be hypnotized. Western scholars who have made experiments on hypnotism, have generally asked for a statement in writing from the subject beforehand to the effect that he is ready to subject himself to the experiment. This in itself creates a willing obedience and a sense of surrender to the experimenter in the mind of the subject. Then what is surprising if the hypnotized subject sees, hears, or acts according to the suggestions or directions of the operator?

Man has always been influencing his near associates and the atmosphere about him, even without a study of hypnotism. Every person has his own aptitudes, thoughts and qualities. Even in external life he is always ready to identify himself with ideas, society and individuals suited to his taste. Such individuals who have a soft and receptive nature at once identify themselves with anyone. Where such an identification takes place, the operator easily obtains the loyalty of the subject and the subject finds no difficulty in carrying out the orders or the suggestions given to him. This is the peculiarity of human nature.

Where there is confidence and identification, such persons are generally not given to reasoning, thinking, or counter reasoning. This is natural. A subordinate officer facing his superior does not think about his own powers. At that moment his entire attention is centred on the execution of orders and the performance of his duty. He does not argue with the officer. On the other hand, when our mind remains aloof, then we begin to think and reason things out, but to the person whom we consider our superior and our well-wisher, we surrender our intellect.

Surrender should not be taken to mean that the intelligence of the subject is diminished. The subject understands

everything but he does not exercise his intellect to oppose the operator. Does a patient not surrender himself to the doctor? Does a subordinate not submit to a superior? According to his nature, man is usually taken in by a more qualified and highly developed person. A man desirous of wealth is infatuated by a rich man. Similarly, a person wishing to acquire knowledge is taken in by a wise man, even as an artist is captivated by one who has fully mastered his art.

Some leaders with specially developed qualities are able to make the masses follow them. This is called *sammohan*, the art of fascination, but you can also call it mass hypnotism. However, by suppressing the natural attributes of the mind and soul through hypnotism or any specialized art of this kind, we prevent the soul power from functioning freely; it which can become destructive unless it is exercised with great care and caution.

Do women or men make better subjects for hypnotism?

Generally it is believed that women are more susceptible to hypnotism than men. This, of course, is not true. Due to a higher rate of nervous impressionability, women generally fall into deep sleep. They are then not in a position to hear the operator or to carry out his instructions. On the contrary, the man who possesses more common sense is hypnotized at once.

In the hypnotic state, the act of hearing and speaking continues from the beginning to the end. The subject has to keep his attention fixed on the voice of the operator and answer his questions or carry out his orders, such as raise your hands, open your eyes, close them, close your fists. While carrying out all these orders, the intellect of the subject gets fatigued. In such conditions, women generally fall into deep sleep.

Therefore, women do not make good subjects in general, but those who are intelligent and have reasoning power can make good subjects. They neither fall asleep nor lose consciousness. Intelligent men are considered to be fit subjects for hypnotism. If an intelligent man has no respect

for the operator, then that individual does not become a fit subject, nor would he like to be one.

What attitude should a hypnotist cultivate?

Hypnotism is a practical science wherein the hypnotist has to do continuous study on different subjects for days, weeks, months and years without caring for success or failure. Sometimes he meets with success, sometimes with failure. One who is anxious to learn hypnotism has to learn self-discipline. He will have to do some practices, some sadhanas to increase his willpower. The hypnotist must have indomitable faith in his power and also the capacity to make the mind concentrate at will.

To continue to speak and to perform the practices and yet to fear that probably it will not turn out right, is not the attitude which will bring success to someone learning hypnotism. On the other hand, the person who is conscious that whatever he says will be carried out by the subject, and that whatever he thinks should happen, will be successful in the science of hypnotism. It would be better for those who are hesitant or compromising in nature not to go in this direction. They will never have success unless they change their entire personality.

Hypnotism means specialized application of common sense. If the sadhanas of the Hindu religion are weighed in the balance of the scientific view point, analyzed, cut and pruned to suit the needs of science, most of them will be rendered meaningless. The present day scientific methods, which people are more enamoured by, create a lot of confusion and also attempt to circumscribe the inherent power of things. Further, looking at such a significant subject as yoga from the scientific point is to make it superficial.

Are kirtan, bhajan, penances, arati, fasts and festivals a kind of high class hypnotism?

The way of life and the sadhanas prescribed by the Hindu religion constitute an all-embracing and refined super

science of hypnotism. What are kirtans, bhajans, penances, arati, fasts, festivals and the like? Are these not the means for auto-suggestion or high class hypnotism? Are worship and prayer not conducive to the sublimation of our inner weaknesses, mental conflicts, guilt complexes, inferiority complexes and frustrations?

You believe in scientific or modern methods. Very well, you may weigh the sadhanas and religions from that scientific standpoint, but by adopting such a scientific outlook, supernatural sciences will lose their importance in your eyes. The most important and vital aspects of sadhana will be devoid of sense. In that form, religion, yoga, spiritualism, etc., will not be followed by any except the materialists whose numbers are not very large. Eighty to ninety persons out of one hundred in this world believe in the existence of God, the soul, subtle powers and the subtle universe.

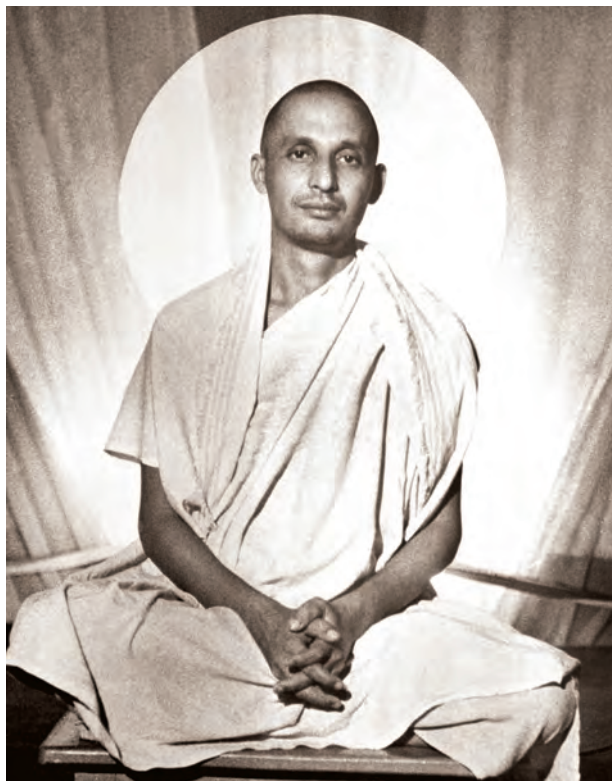
Swamiji, do you consider hypnotism the primary stage of yogavidya?

I consider hypnotism not as a specialized science but as a primary stage of yogavidya. The procedure of hypnotism is to acquire the confidence of the subject, to use his mind and receptivity, to make him work through suggestions, to stimulate his imagination and create the desired reactions. The curing of diseases and reforming of character, which is carried out in the West today by psychoanalysts, is done here by saints and sadhus through the practice of religion.

The repressed tendencies of the mind or the desires of the subject are brought out by the hypnotist. Whereas in India, saints and sages help to purify the mind by showing the way to intense devotion to God by complete surrender to Him, and by advising purity of heart and pure love, attending to the words of some great saint, or association with him, is also a form of hypnotism. To listen to the tales of people's weal or woe and to give healthy and happy suggestions is psychiatry. Are not sadhana, japa, pranayama,

yogasanas, meditation and the like, media for healthy suggestions?

In hypnotism it may happen that the hypnotist goes wrong or some harm comes to the subject, but in India, no harm ever came when the yogic system was taught by the gurus to their properly qualified students after proper tests. The reason was that the student and the teacher were devoid of any ego sense. They never believed that they were the masters of that power. They believed that the mighty power desired that it should manifest itself through their minds, bodies and senses. They not only knew this truth from the intellectual point of view, but realized it through their sadhanas.



3

Patanjali Yoga and the Science of Self-Realization

Bombay, October 1963

What is the aim of human life?

The aim and the end of human life is to attain liberation from bondage or self-realization. Many and varied are the ways by which the goal of self-realization can be attained. The main streams of thought are divided into three branches; the first, that the self could be realized only through *jnana* or real knowledge, the second, pointing to the path of selfless action for the same goal and the third, maintaining that devotion to God is the only way to attain reality.

How does one decide which branch to follow: jnana, selfless action or devotion?

Before the journey towards the goal of self-realization can begin, the mind must be controlled and centred on one point. On the surface these three approaches may look different, but they all have the same aim.

Adi Shankaracharya, in expounding his tenets of the Vedanta philosophy in various texts, has attempted to show that the world is unreal and that the reality, *Brahman*, alone is real and imminent. However, due to the influence of *maya*, the individual soul, out of ignorance, binds itself to the world. His main teaching was to know the self by a process

of elimination of all that was non-self, i.e., all that was not permanent, unchangeable, blissful and true. Therefore, the mind had to be brought to a state of evenness by a steady practice of self-denial, whereby it could, as a matter of course, turn away from the senses and dwell on the self.

The exponents of the bhakti school of thought emphasized the aspect of surrender and devotion to the supreme God with self-effacement. This also covered the ideal of selfless service where the concept of devotion was secondary, and the seeker took no responsibility as the doer of deeds, but behaved only as an agent of a divine power which he called God or divinity. Thus, he did not attach any importance to the world as nothing belonged to him.

Does yoga prescribe a scientific technique for attaining self-realization?

Yoga, which is one of the principal schools of thought, does not lay down a separate philosophy or an independent system of thought. It aims at the same goal, but where others leave the field of investigation open for the seekers to find out for themselves how to evolve their consciousness, to merge with the universal consciousness or ultimate reality, yoga prescribes a scientific technique.

Patanjali's goal is definite, as indicated in sutra two of Samadhi Pada, to establish one's self or to attain kaivalya. He mainly follows the Samkhya school of thought, differing only in one respect, when he introduces the concept of Ishwara and faith, but to Patanjali, Ishwara is not the end but the means to attain the aim of kaivalya. He had to introduce the concept as an expedient to help the seeker to achieve a state of concentration. Having indicated a clear objective, Patanjali goes on to indicate in a scientific, step by step manner, how the aim could be achieved.

It is because of this fundamental character of yoga that it is not classified as a separate philosophy. It is, in fact, the science by means of which the goal of self-realization could be realized by anyone of the followers of the various schools

of thought. Patanjali had in view the basic difficulties which any seeker, whatever his faith or devotion may be, would find. To him a yogi was one who had so attuned his entire being that he could use it to attain kaivalya.

Unlike Adi Shankaracharya, Patanjali had no quarrel with the world. He subscribed to the Samkhya doctrine and accepted prakriti as the causative factor of the universe and did not dismiss the world as unreal. Even according to Adi Shankaracharya, the denial of the reality of the world was a subjective attitude, a studied and perfect detachment which could be arrived at by negation of all that was not real through the cultivation of vairagya.

Patanjali accepts man as he is, as a product of prakriti, an entity subject to the interplay of the three forces: the gunas, sattwa, rajas, tamas, and the mental, and emotional conflicts within him. Therefore, Patanjali bases his technique on *chitta vritti nirodha*, the cessation of the modifications of the mind. Unless the agitations of the mind are silenced and the mind is made *ekagra* or one-pointed, no progress anywhere is possible.

Patanjali is a realist who probed into the inner workings of the ego, which is again conditioned by vasanas. He said that the tendencies of the *chitta vrittis* are normally diffused and engaged in five different directions, which cause agreeable and disagreeable experiences and create new samskaras.

How does Patanjali define vairagya?

Vairagya, according to Patanjali, is not renunciation of the world, but rather the acceptance of the world as it is. It is a recognition that prakriti functions in its natural manner and one must abide by it until, by practising of yoga, one is able to transcend the laws. He defines *vairagya* as self-mastery, a freedom from desire of what is seen or heard. To him, non-attachment is the exercise of discretion. A sadhaka is not asked to renounce and go to a forest, but to strive and find the means and ways to transcend prakriti. This technique is what he teaches.

In this regard, Patanjali seems to play the role of the modern psychologist when he points out the obstructions to the seekers, as well as the development of supraphysical powers and the need to avoid them. He knows the pitfalls that lead to a jnani's or a bhakta's decline, therefore, he points the way to kaivalya in a systematic, step by step manner. He does not despise the body, the instinctive urges or the desires in man, but accepts them as necessary evils, and indicates the way to purify them and transmute them by faith and energetic efforts.

What keeps us from being able to realize the self?

Patanjali's instructions in ashtanga yoga are a concise and effective treatment for securing physical, mental, emotional and spiritual harmony. He does not regard the world as sinful, nor does he introduce the ideas of hell and torture. For him, sin is what leads to alienation from the self. Thus, he does not frighten the seeker but rather points out how a patient and steady effort releases the latent divine powers in man, and how such awareness leads the seeker to strive more for self-realization.

Patanjali points out how kleshas arise. How ignorance or *avidya*, which he defines as the notion which regards the non-eternal as eternal, impure as pure, painful as pleasant and unreal as real, is the cause of all afflictions. It is because of avidya that realization is not attained. Therefore, Patanjali says that afflictions which are yet to come with the fruition of past samskaras should be anticipated and destroyed. The root cause of all misery is the false identification of the *drashta*, the experiencer, with *drishya*, the objects of experience. The object experienced is composed of the three gunas and the identification is caused by avidya. The self or the experiencer is pure unchangeable consciousness. The object of experience is to serve this *atman*, this self, to show the true nature of both drashta and drishya. When this identification ceases, *kaivalya* is attained.

Are the doctrines of yoga in harmony with the experiences of sages?

It is not possible to discuss at length the significance and importance of yogic concepts in the context of the highest philosophical truths as expounded by the various philosophical dissertations. However, yoga contains no doctrine in conflict with the experiences of sages as revealed in the Upanishads. On the contrary, many things which remain mysterious and unexplained in obtruse language are made comprehensible.

However approaches diverge, the fact remains that the aim of man is liberation by whatever name it is indicated: *moksha* for the Vedantin, *vairagya* of the yogi, *vaikuntha* for the bhakta, and so on. Patanjali neither disputes Vedanta nor underrates bhakti. For him, the self is the only reality and in his *Yoga Sutras*, there is a place for all. After all, it is through the mind that the universe is created and through the mind alone, it is dissolved.

Patanjali's treatment of concentration, meditation and samadhi is a process of devolution from the surface to the depths. Like the psychoanalyst, he wishes through his technique to bring awareness to the area of consciousness which lies in the depth of the debris of unconsciousness. He wishes to develop awareness of that supreme truth, the *atman*, which is the pure consciousness, by the light of which the mind, intellect, ego, senses and sense organs, in fact, the entire universe is illuminated. When awareness is firmly fixed, *swaroopa anusandhanam*, discovery of one's self, takes place and the seeker attains self-realization or kaivalya.

Can Brahman be an object of meditation?

Patanjali declares that our awareness is compounded from name, quality and knowledge. So long as consciousness remains established in these aspects, meditation does not lead to kaivalya, because even deep meditation, even in its subtlest aspect, is within the limitations of prakriti. So the four kinds of concrete meditation, *samprajnata samadhi*, to

which he refers, are within the realm of phenomena and are only preparation for the state of union with Brahman.

Brahman is not an object of concentration but pure, undifferentiated consciousness. Patanjali, therefore, declares that all past impressions are wiped out by these preparations for nirvikalpa samadhi, and when they are so extinguished, there are no more modifications of the mind and the seeker enters a state of nirvikalpa samadhi.

Adi Shankaracharya describes *nirvikalpa samadhi* as a continuous consciousness of the unity of atman and Brahman, leaving no trace of duality. That indeed is the state of realization of *kaivalya*, for consciousness is never experienced in the plural but only in the singular, and that is the self-realization to which yoga leads the seeker.



4

Birthday Message

1967

There is no need to tell you today the place of my birth or about the family I come from. I remember my forebears and friends of the past, but I must tell you why I have come. I have been directed to reshape our tradition and help systematize the confused life of today.

Jagadguru Shankaracharya had come to rectify and restore the age-old vedic culture. Time had eroded that tradition and today it must be revived and reinstated again. My dream is to fulfil this great task. It is for you to come to my aid with body, mind and wealth. You may fail but the world will not, as the dream has to be realized. My mission has to be accomplished.

There is confusion and disorder all around. The verities of our life and religion are fast disintegrating. Look at Europe. Life there is completely settled and self-contained. One feels, however, that the people are fast losing the moorings of spirituality. Society there is based on materialism. Our spiritual culture is the most superior in the world. It has its own sublime grandeur.

After coming in contact with different kinds of people of various nations and noticing their living habits, social and ethical customs, I have come to the conclusion that India certainly is great and her people greater still. We shall have to improve and advance in order to teach the world.

5

Message for the European Convention of Yoga

Bihar School of Yoga, Sivanandashram, Munger, 1967

Is yoga capable of bringing about a new social order?

Yoga is going to help man in his course of spiritual evolution and therefore it is one of the world's most sacred cultures. We believe that yoga's contribution will be unique and unparalleled, not only for the correction of errors in the personality, not only for the physical and mental wellbeing of individuals, but to bring about a change in the existing social order.

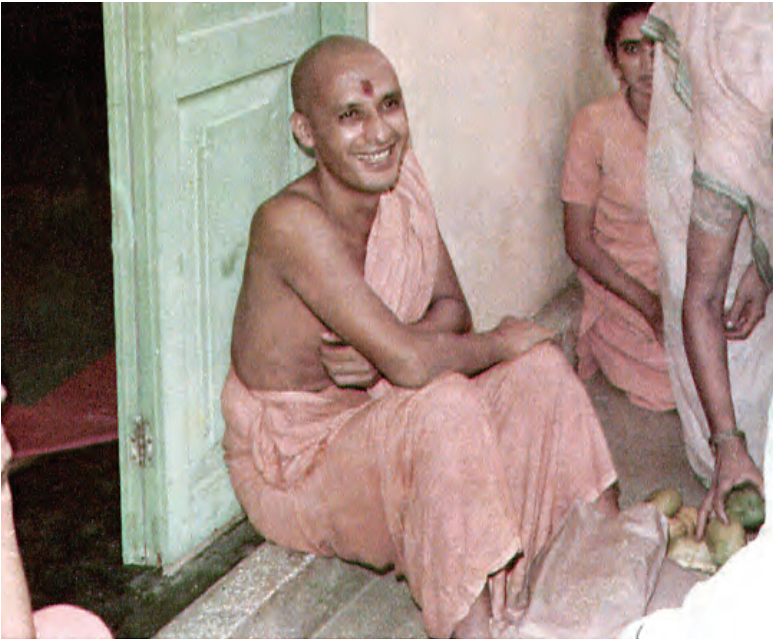
The world today needs a change. The old set-up of society is unable to meet the spiritual demand of the young in the West and in the East. The mass anarchical behaviour, the rowdy expression of the psyche, the lunatic asylums that are swelling with people, the crimes that are mounting day by day in all nations, and the dreams of war that are nursed in the bosom of nations in the East and the West, prove that it is high time we retreat from our materialistic attitudes of life and look within for a more spiritualized, noble life.

In 1963, when the International Yoga Fellowship Movement became clear in my vision, I felt that the historical hour was chiming. It was at that moment that an idea came upon me, that different people of different races could be brought together by the unifying spirit of yoga and that the

great contributions of science could become more beneficial for mankind in this way.

The strong currents of likes and dislikes in individual life have now come to be expressed in national and international life. In this context it is my firm opinion that yoga has to be practised not only individually but collectively, not only by Indians, but by people living in the different corners of the world. Yama and niyama should become international virtues, acceptable by any government and by any religion.

The International Yoga Fellowship Movement in Belgium is doing great work, and in the future I wish to join you for a greater convention in which the people of Europe will take part. So far you have been catering for the individual needs of the people, but now think over a greater plan. Yoga can cater to international needs. Yoga can bring about a new social order, and if at all the psychic race is to be ushered in, it shall only be through yoga.



6

Day-to-Day Report

*Fourth International Yoga Convention, Gondia,
1 to 7 November 1967*

FIRST DAY (MORNING)

Can yoga give us hope amidst the turmoil in the world?

Amidst the encircling gloom, into a world gone awry, the Fourth International Yoga Convention comes as a ray of hope. I welcome this assembly in which there are representatives of many nations, who have come here to listen to the great message of the coming psychic era, the message of yoga, which has forever and ever been the bedrock of Indian civilization. On behalf of the International Yoga Fellowship Movement, the Bihar School of Yoga and the Sivananda Cultural Education Society, I welcome you all. It is said in the *Bhagavad Gita* (4:7):

Whenever there is decline of righteousness, O Arjuna,
and rise of unrighteousness, I manifest Myself.

This is the eternal message of the Lord. Saints take birth to uphold the culture of a nation; this has been our tradition for countless ages. Now, there is friction between nation and nation, there is turmoil in the mind of man, his outer and inner lives are at war with each other, and there is no harmony. In our own country, there is chaos and a sense of

frustration. It looks as if the ancient tradition of saintly souls, keeping alive all that is good in our culture, is no longer there.

How can we re-establish the ancient tradition of India?

Politicians cannot revive it, nor can economists or reformers, for all of them fail to fulfil the one essential condition for its operation, which only saints can do. You cannot reform others unless you reform yourself first. You cannot purify others unless you purify yourself first. Only saints can fulfil this condition. In the surrounding darkness, they bring the bright flame of yoga as their answer for the ills of the modern world, and now the time is ripe for the advent of a new psychic age.

Jagadguru Shree Shankaracharyaji Maharaj of Shree Sharada Peeth of Dwarka, who represents this ancient tradition so well, is here amongst us to perform the inaugural ceremony of this convention. Param Pujya Jagadguruji Maharaj, it is our humble mission to propagate the perennial wisdom of India throughout the world, and with your blessings we march forward.

The good things of life, after which man runs vainly, are impermanent. Instead, he should go in search of that which is not perishable, that which is immortal. As long as man runs after ephemeral things there can be no salvation either for him or for society or for the world. The more we turn towards spiritual pursuits, the more we evolve. That is why in Indian culture, saints who are spiritually advanced souls are held in the highest esteem.

In our daily doings, we waste a great deal of energy. Yoga helps to stop this waste of energy by making man go within, and when he at last turns inwards, all his samskaras, the misdoings of his countless previous births, dissolve. Our conception of yoga is different from how yoga is generally perceived. Asanas, pranayamas, hatha yoga, and so on, are all different limbs of yoga, but they are only a means to an end, the end being the unfoldment of the hidden potential of man.

For us, the ideal to aim for is to bring out the *satyam*, *shivam*, *sundaram*, truth, auspiciousness and beauty – all that is best in man. We believe that all can practise yoga, irrespective of where they are and what they are. We do not believe that only world-shunning renunciates can profit from yoga. We are therefore out to propagate yoga here and abroad. We tell the young and the old to make their life fully yoga-oriented.

With this in mind and inspired by our Param Pujya Guru Swami Sivanandaji, we want to create a gurukul type of educational institution, wherein the ancient and modern ideas of education will blend in happy harmony, where the young will receive education from saints and mahatmas. The large-hearted people of Gondia came forward, worked hard and made our dream a reality.

CONCLUDING SPEECH OF THE MORNING

You have all come here for the Fourth International Yoga Convention. Today is Diwali, a day of auspicious messages. Saints will come to this convention and give us the message of a new way of life. Carry this message and sow it for the benefit of the great mass of people. Become missionaries in the cause, work for its fulfilment.

In Gondia, we have created a new type of public school. Work hard and let this vidyalaya become the forerunner of many such institutions in India and abroad. What is education for if not to create universal brotherhood and a united world? That is the end of all education. Again, is education meant only for degrees, to earn a livelihood? We would rather educate the students to bring out all their unawakened potentialities and their dormant powers.

Education, is not only for earning our daily bread, not degrees and diplomas, but to create a unified world. Everything we learn in schools and elsewhere should bring us nearer to the point of world unity, where all the differences dissolve, diversity merging into unity. Christians

are not Christians, Hindus are not Hindus, Muslims are not Muslims, but we are, first of all, the atman and this should be realized.

This is the message of Vedanta: there is one *atman*, one essence, one consciousness, one reality penetrating and permeating everyone. That should be the background of education, and because Vedanta teaches us this universal brotherhood, there should be one Vedanta textbook in all our education institutes. Vedanta is a science and not metaphysics, it trains our psyche to see and feel the unity which runs like a thread through the universe.

You may put different labels and create different religions but the essence of religion does not change. Religion begins with man and survives after he has gone, you cannot destroy religion. We must strive to remove the differences between religions and then only will there be universal brotherhood. Political differences, racial differences, ideological differences and religious differences must go. For this we have to take full advantage of our educational institutes, and arrange our program of education so that a day will soon dawn when the slogan of 'one world' becomes a reality.

This vedantic vision should be developed through the teaching of yoga. Our school textbooks should be written by those who have knowledge of human psychology. They should be written by seers who can envisage the shape of things to come, thirty or forty years hence. The present system of exerting influence to get the monopoly of producing textbooks must go, as such people write useless rubbish which cannot do any good for our students. Besides, some yogic techniques of meditation should also be introduced in the educational institutes to remove the subconscious samskaras of our students and to bring out the best in the human personality.

This is the message of *Diwali*, the day of victory over the dark forces. It is a wonderful message, this message of one world, one universal brotherhood. Verily, it brings to mind the famous saying of Kabir, the great saint of India:

Behold the one in all things; it is the second that leads you away.

So also said Terence, a Roman philosopher and comic poet:

I am a man; nothing pertaining to humanity is alien to me.

FIRST DAY (AFTERNOON)

Today is Diwali and also Lakshmi pooja day, a festival of lights and joy. On this great day, we dedicate ourselves to the great cause. We are not striving for this noble cause, but we are the fulfilment of a great cause, the advent of a new psychic era, as said in the *Bhagavad Gita* (11:33):

Nimittamatraam bhava sarvyasaachin.

Be no more than an instrument, O Arjuna.

In this spirit we consecrate ourselves, not only in thoughts, not only in words, not merely with our material possessions, but without any reservations whatsoever. It is a grand idea: what happens when we become the instrument of the Lord? When the dew drop slips into the sea, a great miracle takes place: the miracle of the sea entering the dew drop.

On this holy day, in a mood of introspection, we resolve that we shall overcome our limitations, our shortcomings. We shall overcome the difficulties that face us today. When this happens we shall have peace, a peace that passes all understanding, not peace as we understand it, but the peace of nirvana, the peace of final emancipation, the peace of jivanmukta.

Too long have we lived a life of *ajnana*, ignorance. On this auspicious day, we resolve to remove that *ajnana*. We are the children of God, he is our *param pita*, our holy father. As an infant learning to walk moves forward, step by step, towards the outstretched hands of his parent, so too shall we move towards Him, step by step and in complete surrender.

We shall not allow any problems, great or small, to stand in our way. Nothing external can help us, for the unfoldment is within, not without. All the treasures and riches of the world are within.

The name of the Lord is the greatest gift you can have. Try to keep the mind in tune with the name. Keep yourself firmly anchored to it. It is the highest sadhana. The glory of the name is something beyond the comprehension of the human mind. In the scholastic sense of the word, the name is a mere component of a few syllables, but in reality it is not so, for the intellect fails to understand the wondrous working power of the name. It takes away all our *avidya*, gross ignorance. This is the experience of our saints through the centuries. It was for this reason that Swami Sivananda used to say, that the highest sadhana is the sadhana of the name.

SECOND DAY (MORNING)

Can you give an example of a real yogi?

It is hardly necessary to introduce Swami Chidanandaji, but as this is customary, I will do so. Swami Sivanandaji was my guru, your guru and his guru. When Swami Sivananda left this mortal world, Chidanandaji was made the head of his ashram. We are both guru-bhai, however, as he is now in the place left by my guru, I give him the respect which I gave to my guru.

From very early in life, Swami Chidanandaji showed spiritual leanings. In gurudev's ashram, whenever I was unwell, I would run to his room for rest. Whenever I was in temporary despair, I would run to him for sympathy. Whenever there was a misunderstanding with any inmates of the ashram, he would speak on my behalf to gurudev and square up matters. He was my friend, guide and philosopher. He was also the friend of those who were straying from the path. Only a real yogi would befriend the friendless and bring them back to the path.

Saints work less when alive, much more when they leave the physical frame. We have established this public school in

Gondia, and thus have fulfilled a dream of our gurudev. It is part of a great movement, the movement of re-establishing the ancient science of yoga not only in India but throughout the world. I request Swami Chidanandaji not only to bless our movement, but also to transmit his spiritual current so that we may go from strength to strength in this mission of ours.

THIRD DAY (MORNING)

Karunanandaji comes from Australia, but lives in the Himalayas. He is well known to all the villagers in the Himalayan territory. Sannyasins are ageless. They have no nationality. They have only one religion. They are forever in search of the source of all knowledge and inspiration. We are guru-bhai, Swami Sivananda was our guru. If you count him among the half a million Australians who do yogasanas mentioned by Miss Roma Blair, count him as the half a million plus one.

THIRD DAY (AFTERNOON)

In communist countries, no campaign for the propagation of a new way of life can be carried out unless it stands the test of science and proves its worth. In our yoga teacher's training course, we have four students from Czechoslovakia, and one of them has come on behalf of the government itself. These students will carry first-hand knowledge of yoga to Czechoslovakia and conduct research there with the help of modern scientific methods. They will then submit the results of the research to the authorities, which when approved, will give a big push to yoga in Czechoslovakia.

In our country, no questions are asked, no research is done, we take everything for granted. There it is not so, you cannot even write a book on yoga unless you prove it scientifically. However, you can be sure of one thing, once they are convinced that a particular thing is good, and can

stand up to scientific testing, they will hold on to it and will go the whole way for it. They don't believe in half measures.

FOURTH DAY (MORNING)

Must yoga receive the endorsement of modern science for its universal acceptability, or can it stand alone?

My personal opinion is that both yoga and modern science stand on their own footing. For example, to explain yoga, we use the language of yoga; in the same way to explain science, we use the language of science. There are people who say, don't judge yoga from the standpoint of science, leave it alone. There are others, equally adamant, who swear by modern science and say, science must accept yoga before we accept it. This is like saying, prove religion by politics, or prove yoga by miracles and psychic powers. I do feel yoga must be scientific, but this can happen only when we develop a yoga methodology which is flexible enough for scientific research.

FIFTH DAY (MORNING)

Can yoga bring about a better society?

As an introduction I will say a few words on our aims and objects. This assembly of representatives from India and abroad firmly believes that yoga can bring about a better society as well as reform our present-day education. In recent years, educators, scientists and scholars doing research in yoga, have found that yogasana, pranayama and other practices, slowly but surely, transform the human personality from within by removing its inborn or acquired imperfections.

Just as there are individual psychological abnormalities, so also there are national and international psychological abnormalities. Those who pinned their hopes on modern psychology to solve these problems are disillusioned. They are now finding that modern psychology has its limitations

and so fails to bring about the desired physical, mental and spiritual integration of man, however, yoga can achieve this.

Having this in mind, we have made a beginning in the field of education. The Gondia Public School is to be a yoga-oriented school. At the same time, we are going ahead with the propagation of yoga all over the world. We agree with those men of vision who say that the time is ripe for the advent of a psychic era, and yoga will play a key role in ushering it in.

FIFTH DAY (AFTERNOON)

Can our education evolve into something better?

We do not want evolution in our education system, we want a revolution. When a structure becomes old and is tottering, it is no longer possible to repair it. The best thing then is to build anew. A new generation has come into existence, which believes in unbridled freedom to do what it likes, but when there is no discipline and respect for the higher values of life there can only be chaos in society. We have met to discuss these subjects, and we hope our efforts will bear fruit in the right direction.

What are the two types of consciousness?

There are two types of *chetana*, consciousness: *bahiranga*, the external, and *antaranga*, the internal. Through *bahiranga* chetana, you receive your worldly, material thoughts, your objective sense experiences, your dreams in sleep and even visions in meditation. *Antaranga* chetana comes during meditation. In this state there is consciousness, but the thoughts are absent and the senses do not register external impressions. However, it is not a state of the void: it is not *chetana laya*, the absence of consciousness, where you go into deep meditation and come out of it and feel very happy at your success. Someone asks, “What did you experience within?” And you say, “Nothing, it was all blank.” This is *laya*, and it is a deceptive condition, because you feel happy

that you are making great progress whereas actually you are stuck.

When you reach the stage in which the *bahiranga chetana* is absent and *antaranga chetana* is present, there also comes into existence a field of consciousness which I call the *karana chetana*. At this stage, you require guidance from an advanced guru because you are entering the portals of real yoga. As long as you are in the *bahiranga* consciousness, you can carry on the *sadhana* independently. You can practise *nada yoga*, *kriya yoga*, etc., and make progress. Then comes the boundary wall, which must be crossed. You cannot cross it without the help of a guru. You may not believe in the principle of surrender to the guru, because it hurts your ego, but I must emphasize that if you want to overcome the *laya* condition and go beyond, then you cannot do so without the help of a guru.

I used to do *sadhana* even before I took *sannyasa*. In due course, I began to experience this void, this blank, in my meditation, and I congratulated myself that I had reached the goal. I became elated, then I met a *sannyasin*. He shook his head and said, “You are stuck. You must cross this state if you want self-awakening, but only an advanced guru can help you, I cannot.”

I left my home, not for *sannyasa*, but for this self-awakening. I met Swami Sivananda, and my self-purification and *karma*-dissolution started in the service of the guru. The ‘I’ has to be subdued, and whatever work is entrusted by the guru, is to be done without demur. In this way, the disciple gets *atunement* with the guru. With this *atunement*, mental telepathy is established with the guru. The disciple begins to hear his guru’s instructions in the unconscious when in deep meditation. Thus, the guru takes him beyond the dead end of the void, in which the disciple is stuck.

Worldly relationships give happiness of some kind or other. The guru-disciple relationship is different. It leads you to self-realization because therein you empty yourself and go forward. You must have an *advaita bhava* with the

guru and for this, admission of imperfection, self-surrender and humility before the guru are necessary. You may be very smart, but don't be smart with the guru. You may be a great judge of human beings, but don't try to judge your guru; do what he says.

Is the guru necessary to open the doors of the unconscious?

The disciple can carry on sadhana in the conscious dimension only, while the guru helps him in the unconscious. He opens the closed door for him. If you follow any other path, possibly you think that you do not require a guru, but in yoga, the guru is a must, otherwise there is no progress. Again, an ordinary guru can help you in asanas, pranayamas and simple meditation practices, but he has his limitations. The one who knows how to come to you without moving himself an inch is the guru. He has no limitation: he leads the ignorant and the blind to the path of self-realization by opening their third eye. Such a guru is a real avadhoota. He is a child with children, a man with men, a woman with women, a simpleton with simpletons. He is the master.

If yoga is your goal, give up all empty intellectual talk and have a guru. I was with Swami Sivanandaji for twelve years, during which all my worldly ways, all my abnormalities, came to an end. When you switch off the external current, only then can you switch on the internal light. This happened to me. If any of our scriptures say one can do without a guru, throw it away. Scriptures are not the final word, but what self-realized saints say is the final word. All great saints have underlined the necessity of a guru.

SIXTH DAY (AFTERNOON)

Will yoga also be taught in the Sivananda Public School?

In the Sivananda Public School, courses will be the same as required by the education department, but yoga will be taught in a graded form to give the students a well-rounded

personality so that they play their part well in society. Pranayama and *surya namaskara*, the sun worship, as of old, will be reintroduced in this school. Pranayama affects the grey matter of the brain and the sun worship with mantra chanting, has a wholesome effect on the body and mind. Selected yogasanas will come next, and then there will be an easily understood text book on Vedanta.

This will give the students a basic grounding in our culture and religion, and they will grow to love and respect our rich heritage. Many countries have advanced materially, but India is spiritually advanced. This is why we want to combine modern education with ancient yoga. We are not worried if our teachers do not have impressive degrees or qualifications. We are interested in teachers who have studied human nature in practical life and at the same time are convinced that our great heritage can uplift the masses.

Our school teachers and college professors have become bureaucrats of miscellaneous knowledge. If they do daily meditation, understand something of dharma, and try to live it, only then are they fit for their profession. If they themselves are mentally sick, how can they teach?



7

The Science of Yoga

Fourth International Yoga Convention, Gondia, November 1967

Yoga is the heritage of the past and the culture of tomorrow. Its real aim, to attain peace and tranquillity within, has never been more relevant than today. One need not give up one's normal way of living to attain peace and tranquillity. On the contrary, I feel that worldly duties should be attended to with the maximum care, efficiency, imagination and concentration. Only this creates the ability in the individual to emerge as the master of situations and protects him from falling prey to his senses, tensions and frustrations.

Political instabilities, social insecurities and the constant fear of an outbreak of war among the most civilized nations appear as sparks of our short-circuited materialistic civilization. They have already shaken the confidence of humanity from the path it has been travelling along for the last few centuries. As a reaction, this gave birth to a new social order in the form of the Beatles, the hippies, new poetry and literature, obscene dress, and drugs such as LSD, DMT, psilocybin, cannabis and peyote. It is yet to be proved whether this revolt against society is a remedy or is worse than the disease itself.

We are racing after mirages in search of happiness outside, but we do not devote even a little time to know ourselves, to go within and experience the real bliss. Real

joy is not hidden in any material object but rather in the consciousness of enjoying the thing itself. While on the one hand, the march of science has opened up new avenues of progress and has brought many 'impossibilities' within the easy approach of mankind, at the same time its unrestricted misuse has disintegrated the personality of the individual and has opened wide the gates of disaster. What we see all around us can never be called encouraging symptoms. The individual is breaking down, and his unthinkable omissions and commissions have eclipsed his own beautiful image. He has become a patient of various abnormalities, including split personality, neurosis and mental error.

The overcrowded hospitals are unable to accommodate even the donors who built them. Long queues at the gates of mental asylums, increasing rates of suicide and homicidal cases, an ever-growing number of factories manufacturing sleeping pills, tonics and tranquillizers, the problem of unemployment, racial riots, rampant favouritism, corruption and nepotism, are just a few gifts from our present-day society.

It would be erroneous to say that the science of yoga is useful only for individuals and not for society as a whole. The welfare of society is determined by the wellbeing of the individual, and here yoga appears as the blueprint of perfection. The individual wants to remain in harmony with all, but cannot. He wants to get rid of his indecisiveness, hate, anger, aversion and revengeful tendencies, but he is unable to. He himself does not want to commit a wrong for any price, but quite helplessly, he has to sacrifice his godliness at the altar of his own demonry.

These conditions are prevalent not only in the common man, but even the so-called great personalities of world politics suffer from the same troubles, sometimes even more deeply. As a result of the reflections of their own coloured images, we have world wars and the suffering of the common man in various forms. I feel that the practice of yoga can eliminate from society the exploitation of man, the terrors

of world wars, and also the sense of insufficiency from the minds of the people as a whole.

Science and yoga

The veil of mystery, secrecy and absurdity created by some people, covered the real image of yoga. As a result, yoga was looked upon with apprehension, misgiving and doubt. The science of yoga has great physiological and psychological potentialities, which can be effectively practised as a therapy. The effect of yogic techniques on human physiology is an inviting field for investigation and research by modern physiologists. The scientific investigations of yoga psychology are a challenge to modern psychologists.

Drinking acid, walking on water or remaining buried underground for several hours may be a magic show, but it cannot be called yoga, nor are such performers yogis. During the recent past, these types of miraculous circus shows not only tarnished the good name of yoga, but also created doubts and suspicion in many reasonable minds about the purpose for which yoga stands.

There are many people who, after achieving some ordinary powers temporarily, try to create confusion and mislead innocents. There is nothing in any branch of yoga which is beyond the scope of reason and science. No doubt, tremendous miracles can be performed with the help of yogic potentials, but the acts themselves are not yoga. Yoga has a special role to play in the world today, as its practice can remove mental and physical afflictions.

Yoga can bring joy into our hearts and home. It does not lay down extraordinary conditions of self-discipline and behaviour patterns. One can continue enjoying the good things of life and still be a yogi. There is no virtue in retiring to the woods and sitting enchanted in the solitary grandeur of self-equilibrium, *samadhi*. Heroism lies in remaining steadfast in the tumult of life, even when the scales are heavily tilted against us, and in attaining *samadhi* or equilibrium in the midst of all odds.

A physician who wants only healthy persons for his patients is no physician; likewise, if yoga were to work its wonders only on the physically and mentally fit, it would cease to be an amazing science of life. Being a highly rational science, it can benefit all people under all circumstances. After the daily round of mental and physical toil, yoga can bring back resilience and vigour, and restore equipoise. It is under these circumstances that the more sane section of the world population feels very much attracted towards the great system of yoga these days.

Yoga is secular and can be applied to any religion or faith of the world without any hitch. The various other branches of science such as physics, chemistry, astronomy, geometry, physiology and anatomy, cannot be divided as Hindu chemistry or Christian biology. Yoga, being a universal truth, can be adopted with the same ease by a Christian as a Hindu, along with its profound influence on the body, nerves, glands and different dimensions of consciousness. If the coming generations fail to adopt this great technique of real living, a time may come when they are forced to meet the most unthinkable disaster which humanity has ever experienced.



8

The Importance of Yoga Postures

Fourth International Yoga Convention, Gondia, November 1967

Some people underestimate yogasanas and some overestimate them, so let's assess their value in the course of man's spiritual evolution. To many, yoga means yogasanas only, while yogis and spiritual leaders profess that the physical discipline of yogasana is not at all necessary for self-realization. Both of these views are extreme, for yogasanas are neither absolutely essential nor are they altogether unnecessary.

If a jnana yogi thinks that only through knowledge of the scriptures he will attain *tattwa jnana* or knowledge of the self, he is mistaken. In the same way, if a raja yogi neglects the body and depends only on the power of meditation, he cannot reach the goal. His sadhana will be interrupted by the illness of the body. A bhakti yogi is always overconfident of his powers of emotion, devotion and surrender, and believes that he can force his deity to bless him with darshan. A hatha yogi believes that, if everything is within, he will extract it through physical discipline of the voluntary and involuntary, outer and inner organs, muscles, nerves and tissues.

All these four views are not free of prejudices and are wrong notions based on inexperience and unauthorized sayings. Jnana yoga, bhakti yoga, raja yoga and karma yoga are not four different paths. These are like four circles

interpenetrating and overlapping each other, and a part of each forms a part of the other three circles. All spiritual seekers, whether following the path of bhakti, jnana, raja, karma or hatha yoga, need to practise yogasanas also. Yogasanas are not meant for karma yogis or hatha yogis alone, as people tend to believe. The needs of all human beings are more or less alike: only little quantitative and qualitative variations are required to suit one's habits and heredity.

Do yogasanas prepare for higher sadhana?

The digestion of those who are required to sit for long hours in a meditation pose, or of those who practise shastra sadhana for a considerably long period of time at one stretch, becomes weak. Due to intensive sadhana the metabolic rate of the body drops and, for want of proper movement of tissues, nerves, muscles and all organic activities, it runs at such a low speed that after a few years the body becomes prey to disease. Unless the body is completely disease-free and pure, no advanced course of meditation can be followed in this condition. A man's body must vibrate and pulsate with divine health which generates superfine thoughts.

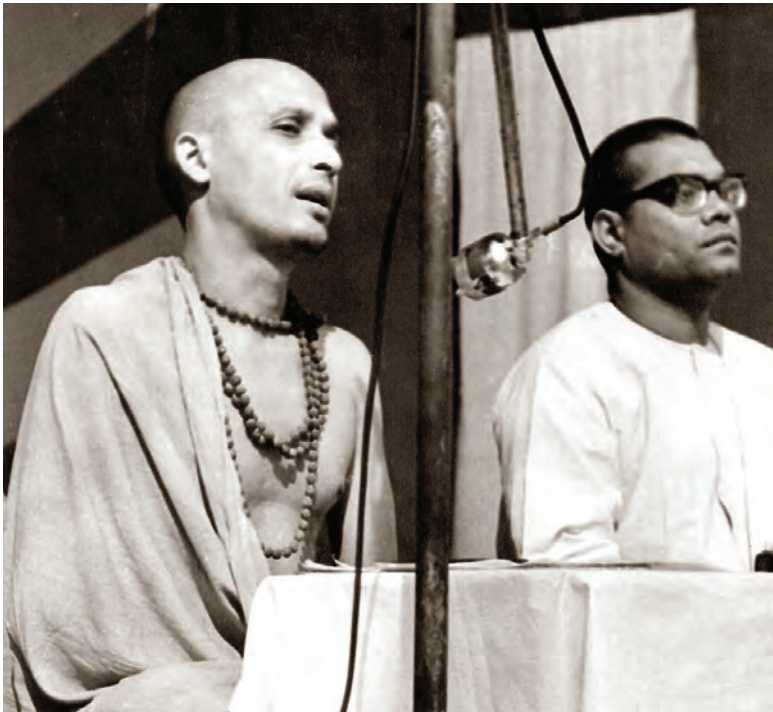
A hale, hearty and stout figure cannot claim to be a model of perfect physical and mental health. An ideal body should be thin, supple and strong. The mind should always be full of bliss and joy. Such a physique is possible only when the seventy-two thousand nadis of the body are absolutely purified through yogic exercises. Yogasanas are beneficial in many other ways as they affect and control the functions of the glands and nerves, make the body flexible, and help to keep the spinal cord in a healthy condition.

The health of the spinal cord is very important as it is the abode and upward passage of the sushumna nadi. Truly speaking, yogasanas pave the way to higher sadhana. We see many mahatmas and jnanis suffering from ailments, which does not create a good impression on us. A man's body

and mind must be under his perfect control. Through the practice of a few simple asanas one can keep oneself healthy.

Often, mental lethargy does not permit a man to learn and practise yogasanas. The mind is quick to find an excuse and to get it endorsed by some scriptures. Only an open, unprejudiced and pure mind can listen to the dictates of pure reason and realize the existence of the pure consciousness. All prejudices about yogasanas need to be shaken off and the faith restored by practising them.

Due importance should be given to yogic kriyas in daily life, in order to make both the body and mind active and energetic. A stage does come when yogis are above the limitations of the body and mind, but it is only after having acquired the benefits of yogasanas.



9

Yoga: The Culture of Tomorrow

Fourth International Yoga Convention, Gondia, November 1967

In our country, where indiscipline has become a burning problem in every phase of life, I believe that yoga and yogasana will play a major role in containing the problem. Taking into consideration the present times and need, I will give the following definition of yoga: *yoga* is a definite means for physical, mental, emotional and spiritual development, because yoga improves, strengthens and develops both the physical and mental personality.

Through yoga one can discipline the body and mind. The man who is unable to observe individual discipline will not understand the meaning of social discipline nor will he be able to follow it. Patanjali starts his book *Yoga Sutras* with (1:1):

Atha yoganushasanam.

Therefore, complete instructions regarding yoga.

Swamiji, could you please tell us of the history of yoga?

According to the history found in old scriptures, Shiva is considered to be the first propounder of the science of yoga, so we can call him the *adi guru* of yoga. His first disciple was Parvati, his wife. According to mythology, once Lord Shiva was teaching yoga to Parvati near the bank of a river. There was nobody else around, but a fish was listening with keen

interest. Parvati saw it and was happy that the fish, though being a water animal, had a keen interest in the yogic philosophy. She prayed to Lord Shiva to transform the fish into a human being. So the same fish was reborn as a man who became famous in yogic history as Matsyendranath, the first of the Nath yogis, who propagated hatha yoga to their disciples. Yogi Matsyendranath used to sit in a peculiar asana for meditation which became famous as matsyendrasana.

Matsyendrasana tones up the liver, kidney and spinal cord and relieves muscular and nervous tension. The light twisting of the whole body and spinal cord fills the body with new energy. This asana can also be called the spinal-twisting asana. In the practice of yogasana, one should generally concentrate more on exercises for the spine and those meant for the dormant nerve centres, which are not exercised by any physical exercises other than asanas.

Does a healthy body mean that the mind becomes healthy?

Yoga can be divided broadly into three parts, in order to analyze and understand it: physical, mental and spiritual. Every man wishes that his body and mind should always be fit and efficient. *Yogasana* means yogic exercises which keep both the body and mind healthy. If the body is not healthy, the mind will not be healthy; and if the mind is unhealthy, the thoughts will be unhealthy too. It is not necessary to emphasize the need to entertain healthy thoughts and a broad and healthy outlook in the present world.

Yogasanas improve the integral personality, but the first achievement of yogic practices is gaining sound, physical health. To achieve this, regular practice of yogasanas is most essential. There are several yogasanas which can be practised, but initially, one must do yogasanas for just ten to fifteen minutes daily.

We can call yogasanas subtle exercises which take care of the external and internal development of the human personality. The digestive system, respiratory system, the spinal cord, all the subtle nerves and the dormant glands begin to function

normally and in correct order. Just as food is essential for the nourishment of the body and for generating energy, definite types of exercises are required for the healthy functioning of the muscles, bones, joints and all the nerve centres.

Who founded yoga and when, is difficult to say, but it is surely a prehistoric science that is at the same time modern. I sent a chief disciple of mine for the propagation and teaching of yoga outside India, and she reported that in Europe and America, there was not a single place where yoga was not accepted. There were already many yoga centres where yoga was practised and propagated.

Different books on yoga have been translated and published in almost all the languages of the world. The importance and application of yoga is increasing so intensely and so rapidly in the present age of science and the atomic era, that I have to repeat again that yoga will be the culture of tomorrow.

The late President of America, John F. Kennedy, had stated that along with materialistic development and progress, America needed a spiritual background and spiritual outlook. In countries like Poland and Czechoslovakia there is also a demand for yoga teachers and adepts.

Are yogasanas the first step to yoga practice?

There are many limbs of yoga, but today I will tell you only about yogasanas. The daily practice of yogasanas reduces muscular and nervous tensions, rectifies and improves the digestive system, removes lethargy and laziness and keeps one active and efficient throughout the day.

When the body and mind are light and free from tension one can do more physical and mental work. Asanas guard against the inner disorders of the body and provide strength and health. There are specific asanas to take care of the liver, digestion, diseases pertaining to blood, and even to provide cures.

Nowadays, many diseases are psychosomatic in nature. The word 'psychosomatic' is derived from the Greek word

‘psyche’, roughly meaning the *jivatman* or the mind; and ‘soma’ pertaining to the body. The diseases which are the result of a lack of harmony between body and mind, are known as psychosomatic disorders. It is the view of yogis and many psychologists that mental diseases such as neurosis, neurasthenia and insomnia are successfully cured by yogasanas. If a combination of yogasanas is practised, it will prevent decay of the body and mind, keep one young, and give complete mental and physical equilibrium.

What is the secret behind the popularity of yoga?

Today, man has to face tensions everywhere in all spheres of life, because the world is full of tensions. However, yoga therapy, in which yogasana is the main practice, keeps the body and mind in tune and establishes coordination. Along with sound physical health, it is equally important and essential to have perfect mental equilibrium and steadiness which is the natural outcome of yogasanas. Yogic practices very quickly correct mental problems such as anger, agitation, depression, dissatisfaction and other complexes.

Yoga is a gradual process, which can be speeded up by regular practice. Yoga has given definite positive results to millions. This is the secret behind its continuity and popularity in spite of major historical changes during the past hundreds of thousands of years. In foreign countries, many people have devoted their life to yoga and have made yoga their primary aim in life. About forty foreign students from all over the world were recently at the Bihar School of Yoga for nine months. Their interest, zest and austerity during the training was worth admiring.

How many yogasanas are there?

There are many asanas, but the important asanas are eighty-four in number. In the scriptures, it is said that there are eighty-four lakh asanas, as many as the number of creatures the individual soul evolves through to become man. All of these are not available in any book, though

references are made in scriptures to several hundred asanas.

Generally, asanas are named after different animals or creatures, such as *makarasana*, the crocodile pose; *kukutasana*, the cockerel pose; *mayurasana*, the peacock pose; *bakasana*, the crane pose; *garudasana*, the eagle pose; *matsyasana*, the fish pose; *bhujangasana*, the serpent pose; *shalabhasana*, the locust pose; *kurmasana*, the tortoise pose, and so on. Some asanas are very difficult to practise and some are easy, but each asana has its own benefits. The easier and elementary asanas are beneficial to all, so men, women and children can practise yogasanas under the guidance of a trained teacher.

The best time to practise asanas is in the mornings after one's bath and before breakfast. In the evenings too, one can practise yogasanas, but on an empty stomach. Games and sports also help to build the body and give strength to the muscles but still, yogasanas have a special benefit which exercises cannot give. Sports and other exercises require a greater amount of time, a larger place and also other accessories, while yogic asanas do not require these extra things and take very little time.

In Europe and America, large centres of yoga have been founded where well-known personalities, including priests, leaders, singers, musicians, poets and dancers are taking a keen interest in yoga. The greatest drawback of yoga is that it makes man a cultured human being and does not allow him to go back to his animal instincts, and so people are afraid of yoga.

For the worldwide propagation of yoga, the hearty cooperation of every individual is most essential. Times are changing fast and yoga will be accepted as one of the essential necessities of life, for yoga is the culture of tomorrow.

10

Necessity of Yoga Sadhana

Fifth International Yoga Convention, Raigarh, November 1968

Is one purpose of sadhana to remove the imperfections of one's personality?

Medicine is indispensable to those who are ill, likewise, yoga sadhana is a must for those who feel something is missing from their life; be it an error in their personality or a physical or mental problem. Yoga sadhana, in fact, is a collective name for all those techniques which are deliberately adopted to remove the imperfections of the personality. Man is restless because he feels the absence of virtues in his life. Rather, he is more conscious of his vicious nature and habits which do not permit him to realize his own glorious and powerful self in the image of God.

Is yoga sadhana a self-imposed discipline?

Yoga sadhana in Hindi means 'practising yoga' and is indicative of undergoing some self-imposed discipline to weed out physical and mental errors. The disciplinary exercises of yoga are meant to condition the mind, intellect, emotion and body in their proper perspective. Doctors of different cults, who are at home with the science of physiology, anatomy and medicine, are available in our society for the treatment of the physical body, but very few are available in society, who know the causes and cures of

mental, emotional and supramental disorders. Western psychology, no doubt, is progressing towards this end but it is yet in its infancy.

Along with its other qualities, can yoga be considered a system of psychotherapy?

Let us examine how yoga is an advanced system of psychotherapy, and discuss the points useful from both the spiritual and psychological angles. When we talk about a man, we do not think about his physical body alone. With the thought of the physical figure of man, there comes at the same time remembrance of the nature of his inner personality also, with its evil and goodness. This idea of an inner personality may not be clear at first, but to us a man means definitely his body and appearance along with his virtues, vices and learning. Thus, when we recollect the qualitative figure of a particular man, it is known as his inner personality which has preferred to make the cave of the physical body its abode.

Why is there conflict between the outer and inner personalities of man?

Sometimes these two personalities of man, the outer and the inner, are not at peace within. A man thinks, speculates, desires or imagines something which is quite alien to his physical habits. He expects and aspires for something which he can never get; he imagines and dreams of what is really beyond his reach. It is here that he begins to develop a nature which causes personality conflict.

Unconsciously and unknowingly, he becomes a victim of frustration, weak will, indecisiveness, fluctuating emotions and desires, indetermination, inferiority complex, and so on. At the same time, other things such as the environment, wrong advice and guidance from friends, and failures, shatter his personality. Ultimately, he is left behind in the race and competition of success and evolution. In order to overcome or compensate for these weaknesses, assertion of the lower self,

which is indeed a part of the inner self, begins to manifest in various wrong, anti-social and anti-moral aspects. Success brings confidence and strength but failures weaken the personality in toto. In such a situation, what is a man to do? Can man get all he wants and aspires for? A man born on this earth has to taste life in its entirety because amidst pain and pleasure he learns the lessons of life.

Life is both sweet and painful, and that is why man loves life. One who has seen the bright light of day cannot avoid the darkness of night, nor is it desirable in the interest of man himself. This is the law of nature and she makes no concession. She treats all alike and the wheel of karma must go on rolling, rewarding each physical and mental action of life. It is therefore essential to cultivate and develop the inner personality of man, which is still in its period of formation.

Does the individual have the capacity to reach a state of perfection?

It is believed that after passing through eighty-four lakh births, life comes to acquire the human form. The various stages through which life passes are mineral, plant, animal and lastly, the human life. Arriving at the human state of life means that matter and form have reached a stage of perfection, and now the subtle power of the inner personality residing within, has to grow and reach the stage of perfection, where a man becomes a *deva* or a superman. The gross, coarse and undeveloped mind of animal life has now to grow more subtle, refined, sensitive, dynamic and all-powerful.

Is it possible through the practices of yoga to uncover the hidden powers of the mind?

Human life is the most blessed one, as it is a signal indicating the beginning and growth of the divine life within. In animal life, we are compelled to learn the use and control of limbs and forms. In human life, man learns the use and control of the mind. He develops latent mental powers to the extreme, but the potentialities of the mind are not known to

every man. In fact, man is unaware of the dormant faculties which lie within his reach. These potentialities are just like unexcavated natural reserves. Through the practices of yoga man unearthes the hidden powers of his mind which could be used: i) for successful living, ii) for acquiring siddhis, and iii) for spiritual realization. The first and the third are desirable and harmless. Through yoga sadhana one acquires equanimity, serenity, one-pointedness of mind and strong determination. One also regains one's lost confidence. These qualities are essential for successful living in all spheres of life, provided one knows how to use the energies generated by yoga sadhana.

To acquire siddhis, one has to crush and demolish the whole physical and mental structure by vigorous practices and divert all mental faculties entirely towards achieving one siddhi only. These siddhis, though hard-earned, have no permanent value. You cannot use them in this world for your own sake nor can you do good to others by their demonstration.

Can siddhis break the bondage of our past samskaras and karma?

Since birth, man is chained with strong iron links of endless desires, *anadi vasanas*, and no siddhi can ever sever the bond of his ignorance or *avidya*. Exhaustion of karma is possible only by one's own effort of sadhana. Through meditation alone, past samskara and bad karma can be burnt. Through the practice of meditation, the light of knowledge dawns which burns all samskaras.

Yoga sadhana is good for self-realization because all the generated and unconsumed energies of the mind and emotions are directed towards one healthy end: the realization of the supreme self, which is the ultimate goal of life. All emotions and mental powers are thus deposited in the safe deposit account of self-realization. However, for proper practice of yoga an adept's advice and guidance is always necessary for a beginner; otherwise he may get lost in the psychic wilderness.

11

Chaturtha Pranayama

Fifth International Yoga Convention, Raigarh, November 1968

Is there a pranayama which can be practised in front of someone else without being noticed?

There are many breathing exercises or pranayamas expounded in yogic literature. All of them are beneficial in so far as they energize the lungs, stimulate the digestive fire, regulate the breathing system and calm the mind, but they are not handy in the sense that they cannot be practised at any place or time, or in front of anyone. For instance, one would certainly feel awkward practising bhasrika, kapalbhati, sheetali or sheetkari while travelling in a train. Hence we need a handy pranayama which is practicable at any place, or even in front of a person without being noticed.

Let me acquaint you with a handy edition of pranayama called rhythmic pranayama, technically known as *chaturtha pranayama*. The beauty and speciality about this pranayama is that it can be practised throughout the day at any place and unobtrusively, yet it bestows mental peace and elevation much quicker than any other pranayama. The practice is simple: inhalation, *pooraka*, and exhalation, *rechaka*, with equal duration. If you inhale for five pulse beats, exhale for the same time span, making the duration of pooraka equal to that of rechaka. Gradually, the duration must be

prolonged and stabilized by inhaling slowly and exhaling for the same duration.

In the beginning, practise inhalation and exhalation through alternate nostrils: inhale through the left nostril, exhale through the right. The next time, inhale through the right and exhale through the left. Thus, continue inhaling from the nostril through which you exhaled a moment before and continue exhaling through the other. After you have perfected this practice, introduce a rhythm according to your capacity. If you inhale for five seconds through the right, exhale for the same duration through the left, and vice versa.

Can you suggest some counting methods?

Counting must be done mentally, while you practise this pranayama. You can count numerically, or if you like, the best way of counting is through the repetition of any simple mantra such as *Om*, *Ram* or *Om Namah Shivaya*, exhaling for as many repetitions of the mantra as you have inhaled. Then proceed to practise through both the nostrils, applying the same method of inhalation and exhalation. You can also practise this pranayama in the position of shavasana which will give you absolute peace and sound sleep.

Does japa with chaturtha pranayama make the practice more effective?

Japa done with this pranayama becomes very effective within a short period and works as a medium of introversion more effectively than the mala. There are some sadhakas who split their mantra in two and set them with the inhalation and exhalation. If they repeat *So* while inhaling, they repeat *Ham* while exhaling, or if they repeat *O . . .* while inhaling they repeat *Mm . . .* while exhaling which is a good technique for the beginner.

Some others do not split their mantra but repeat *Om Namah Shivaya* twice or thrice or as many times as they are able to do while inhaling and while exhaling, they repeat the same mantra the same number of times. This is a

powerful method of *japa sahita pranayama*. I have even come across such sadhakas who inhaled for one hundred *Oms* and exhaled to the same extent. However, a beginner is not advised to attempt such a high level of pranayama.

Can one practise telepathy by using chaturtha pranayama?

Those sadhakas attempting telepathy during inhalation and exhalation count the number of pulse beats on the right wrist, feeling it by pressing it with the four fingers of the left hand. However, the rule of equal breath in and equal breath out is always maintained. First, they press the pulse with the right thumb and feel its beat with attention. Then they mentally repeat by counting on the pulse beats, one, two, three, four, five, and so on, simultaneously inhaling the breath until they have filled the lungs. After the inhalation is complete, they exhale, simultaneously counting out on the pulse beat to the same count and duration as the inhalation. Thus, they continue for hours together until they are able to handle the first technique of wireless telepathy.

What are the effects of practising chaturtha pranayama?

This pranayama becomes prolonged as well as subtle after considerable practice, culminating in sudden introversion of the chitta. If there is tamoguna in the practitioner, chaturtha pranayama will induce sound sleep. If there is rajoguna in the sadhaka it will induce dreams. If there is a combination of all the gunas in the sadhaka, it will first induce dreams and later on, sound sleep. When there is an abundance of sattwa holding sway over rajas and tamas, chaturtha pranayama will bring about true visions and dreams and then sleep. In the case of pure sattwa prevailing, chaturtha pranayama will culminate in samprajnata samadhi or viveka khyati, a state that is neither dream nor sleep.

If a sadhaka is above the three gunas and there is an abundance of true vairagya in him, chaturtha pranayama will establish him in his real swaroopa. Full-time sadhakas can practise chaturtha pranayama throughout the day

without any harm or bringing about heat, unconsciousness, dryness, or pressure on the heart, etc. Of course, the golden rule is always that one should proceed gradually, taking into consideration one's physical as well as mental limitations.



12

The Grace of Lord Rama

*Bihar School of Yoga, Sivanandashram, Munger,
Ramanavami Day, May 1969*

Rama is a name which symbolizes the ultimate perfection of jivatma. Untainted in spirit, pure in all conditions is the soul of Rama. His body may appear to be human like a man, but his soul is the full and unreserved expression of the divine being which is transcendental. The body of Rama is not the avatara, it is his inner being which has chosen the medium of a body for the descent of light, power and perfection. Let us worship his all-pervading spirit, his eternal doings, his sweet assurances. If we fail to do it and merely limit our devotion to the outer physical expression, we shall be erring terribly.

That eternal spirit descended. The collective spiritual efforts of the pained and suppressed masses shook the very core of the divine being. He came down from the unmanifest state to an embodied arena, from timelessness to a timed and limited body, and from namelessness to a named personality. We named him Rama.

This is our idea regarding him. What is his real name? Who knows this? Infinite are his names. All names are his names, yet he is nameless, formless and eternal. His essence is our earth, water, fire, air and ether. Earth is the essence of his body; water is the essence of his lila; fire is the essence

of his spirit; air is the essence of his vibration; ether is the essence of his mind.

Rama is the central and primitive origin of all sounds, of all that is written and read. Languages, rhythm and symbols are all manifestations of Rama. The mind and body when blessed by the divine light, serve Lord Rama, contain him and carry him within them. Mind and body, senses and prana, and reactions arising therefrom, are material, fictitious forms of Rama the eternal.

When the mind is surrendered, the senses are purified, the pranas are given to serve him, and the body is discarded, we behold him as we behold our own bodies. All that happiness is the cheerful smile of my Lord. Let me be lost in that sweet wave of love. Glory is yours, glory you art. The deserted white glaciers speak of your glory. The mammoth and multiple crawling and crying which the forest transmits, as if a messenger of yours stands to proclaim your love for us.

When I stand in the darkness, with my feet frozen, my limbs failing, my eyes blinded, and my heart sunk in fear, it is your blessings that are poured on me in all your love. The greater is your love, the greater is my awe. When you enfold me in your intimate grace, I get a shock, I cannot stand, I cannot think, I cannot see. Everything around me appears to be diminishing, the ground under my feet is shifting.

Is it pain or sorrow or a symptom of your grace my Lord? Yesterday I was happy and gay. I was talking with all and I had plenty of friends, costly dress and great wealth. Then you came. First slowly, like a lover, you touched me, pulled me to your bosom, blessed my eyes, my cheeks and lips and all that was mine. A thrill passed, a sensation of shock pervaded me and I lost sight of all.

I lost sight of friends and wealth when you pulled me towards your bosom. I lost sight of name and fame when you blessed me with the nectar drops of your lips. I lost the very ground on which I stood, the moment your slow footsteps sounded in my ears and shocked my pained and ever

awaiting heart. I lost all my earthly ambitions, my parents, my passions and my belongings, when you entered suddenly into my chamber and poured your love upon me.

Your love is my life. I have found you, my precious devata, at the cost of wealth, wife and children, which can no more be mine. It is not sorrow; it is eternal rest in the bosom of Rama and eternal grace. Lord, keep me with you always. Don't give me up for any number of faults or failings. We are tied together for eternity. Let us not separate again. I don't want anything from you, only keep me with you. Look at me and let me look at you for all time to come, for eternity.

What have I to give you? This idea itself gives pain to me. I have been a beggar for all the ages that have passed. I begged for mercy; I begged for help. At times I begged for passion, at times for hell. Oh! All this troubles me too much. Please don't expect anything of me, a beggar on the pavement of the ages of civilization and destruction.

It is I who am thirsty for your nectarine drops. It is for this I have travelled the great distance of time and have come to your door to beg of you love and care. I am tired; I want rest. Will you love me? Those were the days of ecstasy and unfathomable bliss when you blessed Ayodhya. Those were moments of joy for Kaushalya when you blessed her with enrapturing and holy smiles.

The history of that glorious time sighs like a forlorn widow, having seen you go away from the firmament of our mortal vision. The magnificent arena of Ayodhya is in constant gloom since the day of your departure from her bedchamber. Her eyes have poured out an age full of melancholy, an ocean full of panic and disorder, mental chaos and mortal conflict. Her heart has turned into stone for no mistake of hers. She rolls on like the neglected symbol and history of Ahalya. She is looking askance. "When will you come" is her long reverberating cry. Dasharatha and Kaushalya, Sumitra and Kaikeyi have gone into the unseen panorama of afterlife, together with others. A long range of events has swept past this history of mankind. Many kings

and leaders have come and gone after you, leaving no trace of their existence.

In this interval of time, your glory grows by day and night, since you left your mortal coil and merged into your real nature. Every day brings you among us. Every life is thrilled by ancient memories of you. Your glory has transcended the memories of millions and is dawning on our lives. The name has a blessing. Death fears your name. Your name has consoled and uplifted numberless souls. What an immortal blessing you have left for us! We don't know where you are; we hear you are still in all. We hear that you still guide our destinies; we hear that you are all-pervading. Do you know, we await your arrival?



13

The Practice of Trataka: Its Variations, Benefits and Uses

Bihar School of Yoga, Sivanandashram, Munger 1972

Just as there are various branches of knowledge such as art, science, commerce, music, painting, technology, medicine, law, engineering and so many others, in the same way, there are many branches of yoga. Yoga covers different fields of sadhana. In the elementary stage of education, children are taught Hindi, English, grammar, history, geography, science, painting, and so on. In the elementary study of yoga, many sadhanas have to be learned to a greater or lesser extent.

As one advances in yoga, like going for an MA degree, one has to adopt a special course in sadhana and master it. The MA, MSc, MCom are final degrees of equal status. Thus, a sadhaka of yoga may take up any sadhana and progress in it, and the experiences and knowledge that he acquires therefrom, will be the same as that which may be acquired by others through a different sadhana.

The mind-medium

The mind is a faculty of the soul. The power of the soul is manifested through the mind, which is itself like a component. It has its own attributes, functions and nature, but it is not able to function without association with the soul force. If all the components of a machine are in order, the machine can do a particular work, yet it cannot function by itself without

being motivated by some form of power like the touch of an electrical wire. The mind is in the same position. Its direction and tendencies are separate from each other, but with the association of the soul force it becomes active. A paper-making machine makes paper with electrical power; a tool-making machine makes tools in the same way. Similarly, the mind when associated with the soul force, will work according to its faculties. That is why, motivated by his past tendencies, the individual does good or bad acts, higher or mediocre acts.

Just as the mind acts with the help of the soul, similarly the senses function with the help of the mind. We have five organs of action and five organs of perception. The ears, eyes, skin, tongue and nose are the organs of perception. The speech, hands, feet, reproduction and excretory organs are the organs of action. Like the mind, which is not able to function by itself, the senses also are not able to function without the association of the mind.

Physiology deals with the anatomy of the body and shows its functions. It connects the organs of action and perception with the nerve centres and glands in the brain. Even today physiology has not been able to tell us about certain subtle glands and their functions. Hatha yoga includes the six practices: neti, dhauti, trataka, basti, nauli and kapalbhati. All these practices are related to physiology, psychology and neurology.

For reasons of simplification we have named that power of thought and knowledge through which the senses function the 'mind'. The religious books have dealt extensively with the mind in a variety of ways. It is because of the mind that we are absorbed in the world. The mind is said to be the cause of the bondage of the soul, and of the experiences of happiness and misery.

It should be remembered that the mind is an instrument of self-elevation. The mind is the inspirer of emancipation. When the tendencies of the mind flow towards sources of enjoyment, it becomes the cause of our downfall and unhappiness. When the mind flies towards higher objects,

it becomes the instrument for achieving efficiency in action and for developing intelligence, knowledge and liberation.

We are not concerned here with whether the mind is biological or psychological, but with the fact that it constitutes a medium for working in this world. It is the instrument for acquiring knowledge and virtue, and also for the realization of God and the soul. Wood is one and the same material whichever way it is used. You can make a cudgel out of it or a writing table. A knife is one tool and with it you can cut your fingers or vegetables.

Trataka: sadhana for mind-control and awakening

The first step on the path of spirituality is to control the mind and make it useful. The first sadhana of the sadhaka consists in understanding the mind, in knowing its direction and turning it upwards. The sadhana of trataka will help a great deal in understanding the mind and making its unseen powers active, in order to prepare you for self-realization.

The practice of trataka is independent in its own way and is meant for aspirants of higher categories. Trataka is a powerful sadhana. Gandhari had mastered trataka. Ramana Maharshi also practised trataka. Many sadhus in the mountains have practised this sadhana. Trataka shows us that the eyes are the instruments by which the mind and the soul are reached.

Trataka is of two kinds, internal and external. The internal trataka is called *dharana* or concentration, because in this practice the eyes are closed and the mind is concentrated on some subtle element within. External trataka means fixing the eyes on some object outside. The practices of trataka on any object can be performed during the day or night. In this practice one has to take into account the object, place and time. What is the object on which the eyes are to be fixed? Where is the object to be placed? At what time should it be practised?

The word *trataka* means 'to gaze steadily'. To keep an object straight in front of the eyes and gaze at it without

blinking, is called trataka. At the time of practising trataka, the eyeballs should remain steady and the eyelids should not flicker. No object except the object on which trataka is performed should be seen, and the mind should not wander hither and thither, but be merged in the observation of that object.

The impression of the object falls on the optic nerves. The shadow of the object falls on the eyes and then on the retina. The optic nerves of the retina are connected by the sensory nerves with the brain. The brain has several centres which receive information through the optic nerves and send out commands. Out of these, centres several are asleep or inactive.

Trataka does not merely increase the function of perception. Through the medium of perception, the centres of the brain which remain inactive in an ordinary person are awakened. There are different categories of men. A man is capable of becoming a superman if he is able to awaken and activate those glands and nerve centres which await the natural course of evolution but are usually in an inactive state.

A number of yogis in the Himalayas perform penances and attain siddhis. What practices do they perform? They perform several sadhanas through which they develop the inner centres of the body, thus their senses are fully developed. These things are not impossible, but are natural, rational and intelligible and form part of human evolution. Any person who can devote the time can practise them, under the guidance of a guru.

Trataka and sleep

Generally, before going to bed, people lie down and read a book. Why? Lying down on the bed, the optic nerves are pressed and this pressure makes the eyelids heavy, and the eyelids begin to close. The pressure on the optic nerves causes pressure on the brain too, and therefore, the instruments of the body, tired from the day's activities, fall

asleep in order to remove fatigue and refresh themselves with new energy.

The mind also goes within at the time of sleep, but it does not sleep. The mind, which through the senses was active in the external world, goes inside during sleep and sees the pictures of its inner experiences and impressions. This is exactly what is experienced through the medium of trataka. The only difference is that the eyes remain open. There is no sleep, but all the tendencies are turned inward.

Power of the eyes

In daily life trataka has many and varied uses related to the power of healing and clairvoyance. Trataka can be used for curing eye diseases, spiritual healing, acquiring knowledge of certain events, detection of thieves, murderers, etc., acquiring knowledge of the future, or tracing of lost individuals.

Clairvoyance is a mysterious faculty which can be developed by the practices of trataka. Yogis who have attained this state are able to see things, with closed or open eyes, which a normal person is not able to see. Clairvoyance means 'psychic vision' and such a vision was given by Vyasa to Sanjaya. We can mention a few other great men who had developed this faculty through trataka. Ramana Maharshi had practised a sadhana related to it. C.W. Leadbeater of the Theosophical Society may also have acquired the power of clairvoyance by means of inner trataka.

In yoga, trataka plays an important role. Even Parvati had practised shambhavi mudra which forms an integral part of inner trataka. These days, trataka is practised even in hypnotism. The eyes possess the power to act as a reservoir of energy as well as a transmitter. Through the medium of the eyes, we are able to express many things. We are able to express sorrow, joy, anger, displeasure, invitation, cheerfulness, malice. Through trataka we can acquire great power.

Methods of trataka

There are many methods of trataka which can be used by different sadhakas according to their choice and situation.

On a leaf: Take a large betel leaf. Prepare collyrium with the help of castor oil and make a black dot on the leaf. The dot should be the size of a pea or a little smaller. Fix this leaf on some cardboard. Keep any light, a lamp or a candle, behind you. Practise trataka on that dot in the morning and evening. Go on gazing at the dot continuously for five or ten minutes without moving your eyelids. Do this for six months and then consult your guru.

Candle flame: Light a candle in the darkness and fix your eyes on the flame for five or ten minutes without blinking. Perform this practice in the morning and evening. There should be no break, even for a day, in this sadhana. It should continue until the eyes can fix themselves steadily on the flame. This should be practised by those who have eye defects. Even children who suffer from eye defects should be encouraged to practise this technique.

Darkness: Sit by yourself in the dark and practise trataka on the darkness. The eyes should be open fully. Continue to see in the darkness without any light. Sit there daily and practise it steadily and firmly.

Blue sky: Sit in an open place or on a terrace at the end of the day and continue to gaze at the blue sky without blinking. Try to feel that you have become like the sky or that the sky has come nearer to you. In due course the consciousness of the practitioner becomes so transformed that even though the object is in front of his eyes, he does not know it. The consciousness which separates the seer and the seen does not remain separate, but identifies itself with the object.

Photograph: Keep a small photograph of your chosen deity. Take a sheet of blank paper the size of a book and cut out a circle two inches in diameter, so that there is a round open space in the paper. Now, place the photo of your deity behind the paper and fix it in such a manner that you can

only see the face of your deity through that hole and frame it in glass. During the day practise trataka, keeping this photo in front of you. The photo should be straight in front of the eyes at a distance of one and a half feet. Try not to take your vision outside that round circle and do not see anything except that which is within the circle.

Havan: Perform havan daily and in that sacrificial fire put scented objects. When the fire has ignited and burns steadily for some time, repeat a prayer to the fire god Jataveda and perform trataka on the flame. Try to think of the divine being in the flame while doing trataka.

Crystal: If you happen to have a crystal, practise trataka on it. This is an independent and important sadhana.

Shivalingam: Worship the Shivalingam daily with great devotion. Concentrate on the water that is being poured on it. The Shivalingam must be a black stone. If it is a really black stone, make a sandalwood mark on it and steady your eyes on that mark. Otherwise try to concentrate on the entire black lingam.

Flower: Take a red, white or yellow flower. If it is a dark red rose, keep it in the light and practise trataka on it. If it is a white or yellow flower then practise in a dark room.

Flower on cloth: Take a black or dark green cloth, two feet wide and three feet long. Hang it on the wall in front of you and in the centre of it pin a yellow, white or pink rose. Now sit in front of the flower in a semi-dark room and practise trataka on it.

Metal object: Take any small article made of bright metal, like the vessels that shine when they are polished. Purchase any bright article from the bazaar. It may be of brass, copper, silver or gold, for instance, an incense burner, a small jug, or a panchapatra. It should not be more than two inches in height. Practise trataka on that bright object in half light.

Your shadow: In the morning stand with your back to the sun and practise trataka on the shadow of your neck.

Tea: Take a glass full of tea. Practise trataka on the decoction of tea.

Elements: In order to attain mastery over the elements, draw them in their proper form and colour on any paper, or get them engraved on any metal and perform trataka on it.

Moon: During full moon or when the moon rises at night, practise trataka on the moon.

Water: Sit down on a river bank or raised ground where you can see the current of water for a long distance. Practise trataka on the water. The eyes should remain steadily fixed on one spot. They should not move along the waves.

Changing scenes: While you are travelling in the train, open the window, keep the eyes open and watch the distant scenes without any emotion at all. The eyelids should not flicker, in spite of the changing scenes. The eyeballs should be completely steady and the mind devoid of any feeling. Thus you can do spiritual practices while travelling also.

Needle: Keep a needle hanging on the wall and practise trataka on that. At the time of performing trataka, ensure that no other object is visible and that no other thought comes to the mind.

Guidelines for success in trataka

Trataka is a simple practice, but in this sadhana one has to be careful and alert as one's vision and mental processes have to be watched. If the mind is slightly active, vision wanders away from the object. At the time of gazing, the eyes should not be opened very wide. In the first stage, trataka is practised on an object without thinking of its form, steadily and devoid of any mental changes.

Beginners in trataka should practise it in such a way that the eyes are not strained. If gazing is done in a natural state of mind, strain will be avoided. It is difficult to explain this, but by practice this technique can be acquired automatically. Thus, when the gaze becomes fixed in a natural manner and the aspirant has success in practising trataka continuously for fifteen to twenty minutes, without any feeling of fatigue, for a few days, then he should take up another technique.

The practice of ‘looking into’

We thus divide this sadhana of trataka into two stages. The first is the elementary practice which is the process of gazing without flickering the eyelids. In the second stage it is to be practised with the eyes fixed as if they are searching for something. Here, the process is as if you are carefully observing some object or trying to find something small inside something big. The eyeballs should be steady. There should be no strain, but at the same time, your gazing should be with a purpose. Continuous practice will lead you to this experience and you will be able to understand the meaning of what is being stated here.

The second stage is called the practice of looking into. This ‘looking into practice’ is current in south India. By this method people are able to detect crimes and thefts. However, no one should practise this method without the instruction of a guru, as it can prove dangerous to one’s life. Nature is trying to hide many things from us. That is why these faculties are not available to all.

When an aspirant has some success in this sadhana, he first of all comes to know of certain undesirable deeds, characteristics or events. He is thus unable to tolerate the negative things which he sees in his loved ones and nearest relatives as long as he has not attained complete dispassion. An ordinary man is unable to tolerate slander, sorrow and separation. How will he then bear the foreknowledge of undesirable events? Often such men have a nervous breakdown and even go mad. If this science of trataka is practised for the sake of others, there is every possibility that the practitioner may come to harm through it.

Therefore, this sadhana should not be practised in order to attain a siddhi. Today many magic tricks are current in the villages and the practice of trataka is their basis. Often men practise trataka on a dot of ink put on the thumb nail of the hand and thus find out the whereabouts of a hidden treasure, stolen goods and past or future events. This is indeed a science, but it is different from the physical science.

It is a subjective science. Its practice and achievement have no relation to external things.

The vision of purushas and dreams

When the practice of 'looking into' is perfected, the third stage is reached in trataka. This is called the vision of the divine being. Several forms manifest themselves when one's concentration is perfected on the rays of light which fall on the particular object, whether a crystal, decoction of tea or whatever. These forms are called the *purushas*. They are of two types, the bright and the dark. If it is the dark type, these shadow figures give knowledge of past and future events.

The mind becomes very steady while performing trataka and when it is concentrated, a person sees visions. This is the experience of many when they are in a state of stupor. So long as a man remains awake, his mental tendencies are involved in external objects, but at the time of sleep, they turn inwards and become centrifugal. In this stage people dream the formations of their past impressions. During the practice of trataka the mind becomes concentrated and the aspirant begins to see dreams at that stage. He will see those dreams corresponding to the thought or mental attitude which is predominant at the time.

The dreams follow the mental patterns of the aspirant and reveal themselves as a reality or as symbols. A tamasic sadhaka has perverse dreams which indicate a different meaning. A rajasic sadhaka sees symbolic dreams, while a sattwic aspirant sees true visions. This is possible only when there is intensified awareness and concentrated consciousness.

The proper use of trataka

A little practice of trataka is of great use in removing eye disorders. Those who have weak eye sight and use spectacles should practise trataka for five minutes daily on a dot made on the wall. They should also wash the eyes with triphala every morning and evening. Practise this for fifteen days or a month and then have your eyes examined by a doctor.

There are other types of diseases of the eyes. Certain people have double vision because of detachment of the retina. Some cannot focus their eyes properly. All these disorders can be removed by performing trataka on the flame of a lamp of castor oil.

During the practice of trataka the breathing must be slow, rhythmic and deep. This steadiness in the breathing process will make the body and mind steady. One can always control the onslaught of desire or anger by practising the elementary stage of trataka when one is excited. When any emotional shock is experienced, the practice of trataka is as beneficial as the practice of kumbhaka. The practice of trataka opens up a storehouse of energy.

Trataka makes the mind steady and helps it to concentrate. Therefore, when an individual does any intellectual work, listens carefully to something or thinks about something, his eyes remain steady without a flicker, and thus, a natural state of trataka is attained. This faculty can be applied consciously by an individual whenever he wants to.

Trataka should definitely be practised for at least five minutes before beginning any sadhana. Also when one wants the mind to be concentrated, trataka should be performed on any object for some time, or inner trataka may be practised. Students especially should practise trataka. Its daily practice will help them to develop concentration and memory power as well as improve their eyesight.

Through trataka, pain can be eliminated. It is by trataka that many diseases and afflictions are cured. The poison of a scorpion bite can be eliminated by trataka on the affected area. Likewise, trataka can be performed on a diseased part of the body. In this case, the eyes become the medium for the transmission of healing power.

The inner power can be transmitted through the eyes. The eyes and the science of trataka constitute the medium in accomplishing *vashikaran*, *maran*, *uchchatan*, and *stambhan*, the science of attraction, destruction, affliction and stupefaction. Trataka is also practised when water, flowers, linseed and

cloves, charged with mystic power are offered to someone. When trataka is perfected, any person can be called by the sadhaka and given orders to do any work. For this end, trataka should be performed at two o'clock in the morning.

Of course, it is not proper for a sadhaka to go in for these things. One should not waste one's inner power, time and sadhana for the achievement of such insignificant things, but should use them as an aid for self-realization. This power should be used for the benefit of humankind, otherwise the aspirant hurts himself and others.

Reactions may take place later in the person on whom trataka is practised. Moreover, one has to perform great austerities for acquiring siddhis. These siddhis automatically become exhausted after a certain time, even as a few hundred rupees which were collected with great effort for a number of years are spent. Trataka belongs to a high order of sadhana and deserves to be practised for increasing one's mental power and attaining self-realization.

Difficulties in trataka

I have described several matters worth knowing in trataka sadhana and the methods of its practice, but there are certain difficulties which are surely encountered in its practice. It is difficult to keep the eyes steady as the drooping of the eyelids is a natural tendency. It is difficult to keep them from drooping, even with effort, for a long time. It is also difficult to gaze steadily on one central point continuously, especially in the beginning.

Another difficulty is that the eyes become watery every now and then. Continuous gazing on one object makes the object appear as if it were two. Sometimes the black dot appears white and vice versa. Those who are not used to sitting in one posture for a long time encounter further difficulties. Finally, the sadhaka is often overcome by uncontrollable sleep during the practice of trataka.

A sadhaka has to overcome these difficulties, but it is not difficult to do so if he is alert and firmly fixed in his

ideal. For people of firm determination, the difficulties are surmountable. The practice should be increased gradually and slowly. A concentrated mind is a great help to an aspirant. Everything becomes easy for one who practises with devotion, steadiness and sincerity.

You can practise this sadhana yourself. You can select any of the above mentioned methods of trataka, according to your choice. through regular practice you will achieve the knowledge of yoga and the spiritual science by your own experience. There is nothing higher than self-experience and there is no joy greater than that of practising sadhana.



14

The Spontaneous Awareness of Consciousness

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The Sanskrit word for spiritual practice is *sadhana*. *Sadhana* means spiritual effort, not physical or mental effort. Spiritual effort should be made, but what is this spiritual effort? This endeavour seems to be an act of opening the door beyond which there is enlightenment. How do we open the door and how do we discover spiritual life inside us?

Enlightenment is the prime purpose of yoga and with that purpose we practise it. There are many spiritual practices. Out of these practices there is one method which has become popular throughout the world and that method is called 'the spontaneous awareness of consciousness'. I will try to develop this theme as simply as I can.

Isolation of consciousness

Let anyone who is interested in developing higher awareness sit down in a calm and quiet posture with the eyes closed. Let the mind be aware for some time of the physical body from top to toe. Let the awareness remain in the body. Usually when body consciousness comes to our minds we try to avoid it, so that the body consciousness is lost and then comes again. However, in this method we know that we are thinking of the body, we are aware of the body and we are conscious of the existence of all the bodily elements. At the same time,

the concentration becomes so deep, that after a while we switch from the body to the mind and become aware of the thought process which is taking place somewhere in the conscious and subconscious fields.

The body is gone, the mind remains, and what is that mind? We experience the mind in the form of thoughts, in the form of emotions and in the form of certain subtle processes. Every thought that emerges from the subconscious level, every thought which comes in the form of a symbol, vision, or idea must be seen as clearly as possible. Detach yourself completely. When you disidentify yourself from the thought process, you will find that after a few days practice, you are beyond the mind. Although you were aware of the body, you were aware of the mind, you lose the idea of the body and the mind.

After that, what happens? The consciousness of 'I' comes. 'I' that is all, devoid of the idea of body, devoid of the idea of mind, just 'I' without name, without distinction of caste, creed, sex, or formal name. Nothing, only awareness of 'I'. This awareness becomes so extended, so supreme, that there is a point where the difference between I and you, they, he, everything, is lost. This is the final point of spiritual realization.

In meditation, the aspirant should develop his awareness to the maximum degree, and a little awareness must diffuse into the supreme awareness. Ultimately, nothing should remain except 'One'. When that supreme state is attained, we arrive at a point which is called revelation, or the giving up of knowledge. That is the point of liberation. That is the point of freedom, and that is the point of the isolation of consciousness.

Overcoming obstacles in meditation

In yoga it is believed that man becomes free of all tension in deep meditation, free of worries and anxieties, the so-called subconscious trammel, and finds peace within himself. This peace is different from happiness. This peace is a kind of positive, dynamic power.

Those who wish to take to this meditation should remember a few points. First of all, they should make their asana perfect, the asana in which they can comfortably sit for an hour without moving the body, without feeling any pain or hampering the blood circulation.

Then after deep meditation, they must see that they do not enter a state of depression, which is usual to all spiritual aspirants due to lack of sufficient oxygen in the system. Lack of oxygen in the system causes depression, yawning and sleep, which one has to avoid by the regular practice of pranayama, a pure diet, and so on.

When this has been done, one has to fix up the faults in one's meditation. Meditation seems to be so easy in the beginning, but when one actually practises it, one finds it so difficult. To sit down for meditation is so easy but after a certain stage, what happens? The practitioner sleeps. He forgets everything around him. He does not remember what he is doing. Not only that, he forgets that he is doing it. Self-awareness is lost and that is not desirable in meditation.

Most aspirants who sit for meditation want to forget everything. That is quite alright, but please remember that you should try to forget everything except self-awareness. This is the one central point you must remember during meditation. If you forget it, you miss the path and you enter into *laya*, total suspension of consciousness, and that is a spiritual loss.

What should happen in meditation? When you sit down quietly for meditation and try to forget your body, try to forget your mind, through positive or negative methods, the consciousness should remain throughout. The awareness that you are meditating, should remain to a great extent.

This is the point where the awareness of the meditator, the object of meditation, the process of meditation, this triad, this threefold process, exists. 'I am meditating', this knowledge remains, and the awareness, 'I am meditating on the point', should remain, and the process of meditation, 'how it is proceeding', should also remain.

This triad helps you in the beginning to maintain awareness throughout meditation, otherwise the suspension of consciousness takes place. Finally, you must have patience, perseverance and the power of intuition, through which you force your consciousness to detach yourself from the material aspect of your personality.

The divine pilgrimage

I have given you a little glimpse of meditation and yoga. I personally feel that in our lives everything is available, you can get everything quickly, but you do not get what we call meditation. Very few teachers and very few guides are there to give us guidance, point by point, to let us know how to take this mind on the path of divine pilgrimage.

The mind has to be taken from outside, where it is wandering here and there among the sense objects of the world, the temporary things, the things that are so nice in the beginning and so bad in the end. The mind has to be taken from these things and directed inside, where the innermost part of our personality is full of illumination, full of knowledge, full of peace and bliss.

Those who know how to go there at least for a few seconds every day, they know how to maintain peace, tranquillity, equanimity and strength in their lives. This is the panacea for our age. My request to all of you is to try meditation every day, if possible in the morning hours, and if not in the morning then definitely at night before you go to bed.

If you practise in the morning hours, the condition of the mind, body, glandular secretions, and so on, is conducive to meditation. Yogis throughout the world get up at 4 am and meditate until 6 am. It may not be possible for you, but those who can, should try to experience the divine moment of meditation. Let it not be forced, let it be spontaneous, let it come from within you. If you find it difficult to meditate in the morning, practise at night.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Please give us an idea of meditation in action, or karma yoga?

When one dedicates oneself and finds the light within, one has to transfer the light outside into one's life. The peace that is experienced within should reflect and emanate to the life outside in behaviour, thought, action, and so on. It is said that the yogi who has experienced peace within takes everything in this life, every action, as the command of the higher powers.

Not only that, it is said in the *Bhagavad Gita*, that every action is an instrumental cause for self-purification. Therefore, we should do work and be free from its negative influences. We must see that we do not shake the personality and taint our inner order, equilibrium and tranquillity, which we have attained through meditation. Through spiritual silence we should prove it to be the same in our day-to-day life. That is the order of karma yoga in relation to spiritual enlightenment.

When you do anything in this world you achieve results, positive, negative or mixed. Results are always there, whether you get positive, negative or mixed results. Usually it is negative results which influence the mind. If you obtain good results, it is alright, but you never obtain only good results. The results are usually mixed or negative, so therefore, the mind is greatly influenced by the negative aspect of results.

What one has to do, since one has to reap results anyway, is to make the mind so strong, so well attended, and at the same time so powerful, that the influence is not felt by the mind. You are not shaken by anything. It is said in the *Bhagavad Gita*, 'You should do your duty without being attached. Do not be influenced by the results of action.'

What is the relationship between breathing and mind control?

The system of pranayama is practised so that the grey matter, the brain, can be affected to a great degree. Peace of mind

increases on account of the introduction of extra oxygen. By the practice of pranayama, the mind is quietened. *Kumbhaka*, breath retention, brings about a state of inertia in our coronary system, and naturally where there is inertia, there is peace and tranquillity.

Apart from the regular method of pranayama, there is another technique which is little known. Through that method the awakening of kundalini takes place and the control of the mind becomes quite easy, but this pranayama is not usually spoken of in books. All other breathing exercises that we do are naturally useful in bringing about a state of passivity in the mind, but to have complete control over all dimensions of the *chitta*, the mind, I think that higher pranayama should be practised.

Please explain more about this feeling of awareness in meditation.

In every human being there is awareness and that awareness is present even now. It is because of this awareness that you are aware that you are listening, you know what you are doing. You are doing something; you are thinking and at the same time you are aware of it, you are a witness. You do not find this awareness in an animal. An animal does so many things, but since the awareness is not developed, it is dormant, therefore, it does not know.

This awareness is developed in man, right from the beginning, and when it leaves the portals of this body, the portals of this mind, it becomes completely pure. When the body consciousness and the mental consciousness are not activated with this pure consciousness, it is known as cosmic consciousness.

This particular awareness has no form. It is not in the form of attention or in the form of thought. You are sitting here now, you are aware of so many things, and the awareness is full of illumination. For the time being, maintain your awareness as it is. Then take away the objects, yourself, myself, and everyone else, as if by magic they

become absent for some time. Only awareness remains at the same intensity.

That is the form of awareness in yoga, and usually it is not properly understood because there is no fundamental conception of the word awareness. When I use the word awareness, I use it to mean this kind of awareness. This is the awareness which remains even at night, when you are asleep. In the morning when you wake up, I ask you, "How did you sleep?" you answer, "I had a nice sleep; I slept well." Now the question arises, if you were sleeping, how did you know that you were sleeping well? It means that the experiencer, the witness of the sleep, was also there. So, this awareness is the supreme and subtle state of awareness in yoga.

What is your concept of bhakti yoga?

Karma yoga and bhakti yoga, in my opinion, must go hand in hand. Without bhakti yoga, karma yoga cannot be practised. Man has bhakti from within. According to the yogic concept, there are two types of bhakti. One is the form of ritual and prayer about which we know enough. The other aspect of bhakti is non-ritualistic, but it is the nature of your heart, the feeling for God, about which you have not been trained and you know nothing. The strong feeling, the strong impulse or attraction towards the Supreme Being is known as *bhakti*.

As a matter of fact, my conception of bhakti is that it is a method, a process of adjustment, of selfless emotion. We have so much emotional energy in us that we are unable to exhaust that energy. We give that energy to our children, family members, various activities in the world, but it remains unexhausted.

So it creates an explosion in our personality. It is something like a tank being filled up with a stream of water and then overflowing. The energy fills our mind; our mind is unable to contain that energy, so it overflows. When it overflows, it is in the form of erratic behaviour, in the form

of many negative things that we see in the world, such as murder and crime – this is nothing but misguided emotion.

This energy which we have so much of inside, must be properly directed. How do we do this? If we give the whole of this emotional energy to our family members, the outlet is still not sufficient. We can love the whole world, as a matter of fact, we have so much energy, but we do not know how to do this.

Ultimately, it was decided by the ancient seers that you discover the Cosmic Being, the Supreme Being, and whatever love you have within, you give to Him. In this way, the unused treasure of love which you have been misusing in so many ways can be properly channelled. Since He is infinite, He can consume all the love you give him.

You give love to Him in the form of play, in the form of prayer, in the form of service to humanity, in the form of calm and quiet meditation, in the form of self-purification or by chanting His name day in and day out. You give Him your love in any manner you can and He is able to consume it, because He is eternal and infinite. So this is the concept of bhakti which I think is one of the wonderful methods of bringing man to normal behaviour.

Is there a particular reason for doing meditation between 4 am and 6 am?

According to our system of hatha yoga, the time from 4 am to 6 am is when the solar system and the lunar system are both active. As they are active, both nostrils flow freely, and as they have a free flow, meditation becomes easier.

What do we mean by lunar and solar? By lunar, we mean the thyroid glands and by solar we mean the sex glands. These two systems start working between 4 am and 6 am. After this they are again quiet. It is during this time, when the energy blocks are completely cleared and the toxins are eliminated, when the mental and pranic systems, the solar and lunar systems, are working, that meditation will be spontaneous, without difficulty. This is the purpose of doing meditation at this time.

Can you please elucidate the meaning of the word kundalini?

The word kundalini in yoga pertains to the sleeping energy in man. In the lower part of the body is a gland, a muscle, an organ, which is not developed as yet. Through certain *kriyas*, yogic techniques, the life forces can be roused in the body. Every part of our body has particular activities and faculties. The brain has its own activities, but these are the psychic faculties, the deeper and higher faculties, the secret faculties.

According to those who practise kundalini yoga, the seat of kundalini is somewhere in the pelvis, in a particular gland or place which can be awakened by definite methods under regulated conditions. When that is done, a sympathetic action takes place. There are many other centres which can be aroused. In kundalini yoga there are many methods by which you can awaken the *chakras*, the psychic centres. However, before these psychic centres are awakened, it is advisable to try to find out whether any of the aspirant's psychic centres were awakened in a previous life.

This is necessary to know because in many cases, people have already done practices in a previous birth and some of their psychic powers have been awakened, some of their psychic centres are already developed. We have to find out from where we should begin, and according to that the practices are ordained. I think that the method of awakening the kundalini depends a lot upon previous achievements.

What is the importance of diet in the practice of yoga?

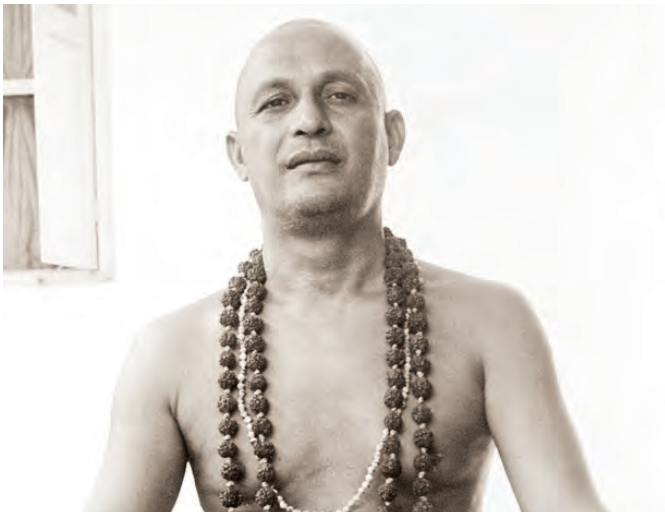
Diet plays an important role because of its relation with digestion. During meditation, the secretion of hydrochloric acid and other enzymes which are directly stimulated during digestion, have proved to be a great hindrance and obstruction. When you are sitting in meditation, hyper-acidity in the stomach can bring about visions, hallucinations and illusions. In the same manner, if your hormones or glands are affected by heat, toxins or fermentation in

the system, not only the digestive system but also the brain reacts. Naturally it is said that in yoga, diet is most important.

Could you tell us briefly about the path to nirvana?

I personally feel that in everyone's spiritual life the development of awareness is the greatest event. We don't talk about the body, but about the soul, the spirit. That spirit passes through a dark period and finally the darkness is removed through a certain understanding of visions, through a certain understanding of hidden light or the experience of astral events.

There is a moment in meditation, when the awareness becomes so full and thereafter no further expansion takes place, and that is the concept of *nirvana*, the concept of complete enlightenment. Complete enlightenment, nirvana, or emancipation means that the individual awareness fuses with the cosmic awareness. The notion of duality between the individual and the cosmic is completely annihilated. That is the concept on which meditation or the fundamentals of awareness should be built.



15

Relaxation of Tensions through Yoga

Bihar School of Yoga, Sivanandashram, Munger 1973

What causes tension?

Many years ago great psychologists predicted that the present technological revolution would create new psychological problems for humanity. Their predictions have come true. Throughout the world the modern mind has become burdened with so much tension and anxiety. Man has lost peace of mind.

The advent of machinery is giving the present-day man more leisure time than any other time in the history of humankind, yet he does not know how to use his spare time usefully. He spends his time in nerve-exciting amusements through which he tries to forget himself. His mental problems accumulate as each day passes: family problems, economic problems, worries regarding his state of bad health. Modern man is assailed by problems of many forms, jealousies, hatreds, sorrows, fears, and so on, and all these influences make his mind continually restless.

Modern civilization has placed all sorts of comforts and amusements before man, but unfortunately he has lost his appetite for them. His mind prevents him from having a positive, healthy and trouble-free attitude towards life. Life is to be enjoyed to the fullest, yet why is twentieth century man unable to do that among so many aids to happiness bestowed by modern science?

There was a time in Indian history when the same crisis occurred. It was at a time when people reached a peak of material prosperity and education. People at that time found themselves in the same boat as the people of today. As the wealth increased, their mental tensions increased by the same degree. At that time a great sage, by the name of Kapila, looked at the prevailing situation and propounded his system of Samkhya Yoga. It was formulated with the express purpose of giving happiness to the neurotic and confused people of that time.

Later, during the period of Buddha, Sage Patanjali modified Kapila's philosophy and presented it in the form of the *Yoga Sutras*. In these sutras, yoga is defined as the science of mental control and control over all the dimensions of personality and different patterns of behaviour. Though the type of civilization at the time of Sage Kapila and Sage Patanjali was a lot different to the civilization of today, the mind has not changed very much, if at all. In other words, although yoga was developed many years ago, its techniques are nevertheless of immense use today to help people find stability in this tumultuous world.

What is tension?

Yoga is the perfect practical system for relaxing tensions. Modern psychology has defined three types of tension which create the agonies in human life. These are muscular, mental and emotional tensions. They cause various troubles such as diseases, inhibitions, complexes and neuroses. Without tension a person does not suffer, yet with tension a person can do nothing but suffer. Most people associate the word tension with a kind of muscular or mental blockage, which is partly correct, but does not convey the deeper significance of tension.

Let us take a case history of one man who was suffering from mental troubles. His case was studied by a team of medical scientists. Electroencephalograph readings revealed that he had no tensions in his brain, yet the man

insisted that he could not sleep at night, that he had no appetite and he felt generally tense. Thus a disagreement arose between the man and the medical experts. The man told them in strong terms that he felt uneasy, whilst the scientists demonstrated that nothing was really wrong with him.

The man was eventually taken to a psychologist, who analyzed his whole personality. This probing revealed that the cause of the tension was to be found in one incident in his life which occurred when he was a baby. This incident was so deeply rooted in his mind that at the age of thirty-five he began to suffer tensions as a manifestation of the incident. This was an unconscious emotional tension or disorder.

Even though the patient's problem was diagnosed by a psychologist, the same psychologist could not cure him. So what should the man do? He knows his problem, but he cannot remove it. He is actually one step up the ladder towards cure, for most people do not even know what causes their tension, but of course, the patient wants to remove the tension.

Why is a changed mind necessary?

These emotional tensions are difficult to remove and, in fact, they can only be removed if a man undergoes a process of reorientation. Suppose a man receives a telegram informing him that his son has been killed. He is shocked and this shock manifests in the body in the form of pain, loss of appetite, and so on. This is only one incident in a person's life. Yoga tries to change the individual's reactions to the ups and downs of life, not by analytical understanding, not through intellectual understanding, but by an understanding through a changed mind. When you understand through a changed mind then all the complications of life will not influence you, all previous tensions will disappear and no new ones will replace them.

Some people would suggest hypnotism as a method of removing emotional tensions. In fact, hypnotic techniques

will only give temporary benefits. Hypnotism might give you peace of mind for a short time by removing the deep-rooted problems, but what will happen if some other crisis occurs in your life? You have removed the past tension, yet other problems will occur in your mind, as you do not have the mind trained to resist further incidents in life.

Which practices release tension?

How does yoga actually tackle the problem? First it helps to remove tensions through the practice of asanas. It has been proved scientifically that these practices bring about complete physical and mental relaxation in the system. Scientists have only recently realized the enormous influence that the endocrine glands have on the physical and mental behaviour of man. As you know, these glands include the thyroid, pancreas, pituitary, pineal, adrenal glands, and so on.

Now scientists have come to the conclusion that if you are angry by nature, there is something wrong with your glands. If you think too much, some of your glands are overactive. If you worry too much, if you sleep too much, if you are too self-conscious, then the reason lies partly with the endocrinal glands. Of course the mind has a large influence, yet these two systems, the mind and glandular system, are closely linked with each other. The regular practice of asanas keeps the glandular system in balance and thereby removes many tensions. This is a fact that has been verified by many modern scientists.

Asanas also relax muscular tensions, something that is essential for modern man who finds this most difficult. In many cases people consider themselves to be relaxed, yet the muscles remain in a state of tension. Asanas will remove these tensions and give the practitioner real muscular relaxation. If the asanas are done with concentration, they will quickly eliminate mental tensions and induce tranquillity of mind. The practitioner will find he feels elated and carefree and is able to face the problems of the day with confidence and without anxiety.

The next practice recommended by yoga is pranayama. This ensures that the brain receives a good supply of oxygen, the fuel it needs to function properly. If you do not give a car petrol, it will not run. In the same way, if the brain does not get a sufficient supply of oxygen, it will not work correctly. Many people do not nourish their brains sufficiently due to incorrect breathing. It is easy for toxins to accumulate in the brain. Pranayama helps to remove these poisons and, therefore, allows the brain to function more efficiently. This helps to remove all kinds of tensions.

What is the purpose of meditation?

Now we come to the yogic practice which removes deep-rooted emotional tensions and strengthens the individual's ability to face the ups and downs of life without being dragged into the mire of unhappiness by accumulating new tensions. The method is meditation. The fundamental technique of meditation brings about a state, in which the tensions in the different spheres of the personality are removed, and it makes the mind more resistant to future causes of tension.

Modern psychology tries to teach us to shed our fears, but this is easier said than done. It seems impossible to get rid of the deep fears and phobias. First of all, one must be aware of their causes. The mind must be relaxed in order to examine itself. How can the mind relax if the subconscious realms are in a state of tension? The method is through meditation.

If you sit down quietly and try to lock yourself inside your mind, it is almost impossible. The mind conspires against itself. It is almost the same as the house owner who feels complete security. He pays no attention to the activities of his servant. He does not notice that the servant is conspiring to steal his belongings. One morning he wakes up and finds that his house has been looted. It happened because he was not paying attention to what was happening.

We neglect our minds in the same way. We are normally so extroverted that we do not devote any time to what is happening in our minds. As a result most people find it

impossible to watch the inner workings of their minds and, therefore, they cannot remove the tensions that arise. If you want to develop the ability to be aware of your inner feelings you will have to observe yourself carefully.

Certain things can be stopped at their inception. The tensions can be stopped before they manifest in the form of unhappiness, if only people will watch their minds. In the hectic activities of the modern world, people do not listen to their minds. They have no time to listen to the good advice given by the mind. If a person watches his mind carefully, it will tell him why he is unhappy, why he feels tense and why he feels pessimistic about everything.

How can one gain peace of mind?

You should devote a little time to meditation and of course to other techniques of yoga. You should carry on with your daily life, but set aside a little time when the mind can tell you why it feels unhappy. Half an hour in the morning and evening is not much time to allocate, in view of the mental peace that can result.

Just sit in a quiet room and forget your accomplishments, failures, personality, social status and your happiness or lack of it. Understand the mind and after some time you will be able to understand the language of the mind, not the outer mind but the inner mind, the part of the mind that has a much greater control over our lives.

Yoga is the only sure and permanent science for giving people peace of mind. In bygone days a person was more likely to have peace of mind for the way of life was slower and there were less interactions between the individual and other people. To maintain peace of mind in the modern world is not easy. The sudden rise in mental patients is a clear indication. It requires the individual to take definite steps to ensure that the mind is cleaned of tensions and that it remains in this condition. The method that all people must adopt now and in the future is yoga.

16

Yoga: The Solution to the Youth Problem

Bihar School of Yoga, Sivanandashram, Munger 1973

Why do young people rebel?

Young people today are seeking to break down the barriers of society, to create new means of expression, to improve social conditions and rectify any injustices which they see around them. In this respect, they are no different to young people throughout the history of humankind. The youth have always sought to change the existing order, whether in their parents' house, in their village, in their town or country.

The thing that is different in the present modern age is that, because of the advent of international communication, young people are now able to know the ideas of other young people in other countries, share ideas and widely publicize new means of expression, or decry injustices internationally. It is a natural process in nature for young people to rebel against tradition, for without it man would not evolve. By not accepting tradition, young people are only trying to find their place in life where they can be happy, a place that is in accordance with their individual nature and not in opposition to their nature.

Why are the youth attracted to yoga?

Today something strange is happening. While young people have rejected most of the old ideas, even ideas that

were popular only ten years ago, they have flocked in large numbers to the ancient tradition of yoga. The number of people who practise yoga is increasing in all age groups, but young people in particular are attracted to yoga like insects to a lamp. Why is this? Why have young people throughout the whole world started to adopt yoga as their way of life?

Older people should consider this phenomenon carefully, for every major change that has occurred in the history of humankind has occurred through youthful dissatisfaction that continued into adult life, where the individual, or individuals, have effected change. Therefore, it seems more than a probability that the interest young people show in yoga will infiltrate the whole of society.

It is a common cry among the older generation that young people have too much freedom and use their time pursuing useless things. They show a great interest in all kinds of music which is incomprehensible, or even nauseating to older people. They wear strange clothes which seem even stranger to their elders. They indulge in drugs which older people object to and condemn. The fact that their critics consume large amounts of alcohol is conveniently forgotten.

Actually, whether these criticisms are valid or not, it can be said in all sincerity, that the youth of today are the most truth-orientated people that have ever existed. Whatever young people do, good or bad in their father's and mother's eyes, is an endeavour, either consciously or unconsciously, to find or experience truth. Young people today have, as no other generation has dared to do, removed and discarded taboos, traditions, social restrictions and hypocrisies on an unprecedented scale.

The circumstances in the world have made this possible. Modern technology and widespread education have given the young people more facilities and the chance to do their own thing. The fact that young people are experimenting with so many different things is actually a positive contribution to human progress and the evolution

of humankind. Older people should watch them and learn from them.

It is in the search for truth that young people have universally adopted yoga. They have discovered that yoga does not ask them to accept dogmas or stereotyped ideas. It merely suggests techniques and tells people to find out things for themselves. Yoga gives them a way of life that transcends national boundaries, something that people throughout history and large numbers of people even today cannot understand.

If I am an Indian, then I must love India more than any other country. If I am English, England must be the greatest country, and so on. Of course most people never question the sense of this kind of thinking. The young person of today, however, is too wise; he knows this is not the truth and is just blind dogma and the cause of the futile wars throughout the ages.

Yoga has started to flourish again after thousands of years of sleep, and it is flourishing because the wisdom of the present-day young people demands it. If yoga in any way preached dogma, untruths or slogans against humanity, young people would not even try it, let alone adopt it as they have. If yoga said that it is the only way to live life and that other systems are completely wrong, young people would not have been attracted to it.

Why are the young without a sense of direction?

Today, more than any other time in history, there is a crisis of status. Few people are sure of their place in time and space, in the world, in their country, in their work, or in their homes. This is the case with old and young people alike. There are so many conflicting ideas and possibilities open to most people, and when there are so many different things that each person can do with his life, one becomes confused and does not know which direction to take. How much easier it was in the olden days when each person followed in his parent's footsteps and knew what he would be doing not only tomorrow but also in twenty years time.

So what can young people do? How can they decide what the basis for living their lives should be? They can ask their parents, but they know instinctively that their parents are as ignorant as they are. They want happiness and contentment, and these things few of their elders know about, for as one great writer put it, “Most people lead lives of quiet desperation.”

Can anyone expect young people to follow their parents when they see underneath all the show and pomp that their parents are really unhappy in the lifestyle that they lead? They see that their elders’ way of life gives happiness only on fleeting occasions, perhaps when they unexpectedly earn a lot of money or when they go to the cinema or when they eat some nice food.

Why have young people taken to yoga?

Young people perceive, and rightly so, that everyone’s life should be a continual expression of joy. Happiness is the true condition of man. This is why young people have taken up yoga; to find their true nature and so find permanent happiness that transcends the transitory happiness given by sensual pleasures.

In yoga they can see a complete way of life that tackles all the facets of man’s being. They see that the techniques of asanas and pranayama give physical and mental health, the most basic step to achieving permanent happiness. How different this attitude is compared to the older generation who tend not to worry much about the higher aspect of their being. If their bodies work, all is well, even if they have pain or indigestion. Young people, however, have a positive attitude to health, they don’t wait for illness to occur, they prevent it from occurring.

Young people realize that maintaining or obtaining good mental health is the next step to permanent happiness. Older people do not seem to give much consideration to this factor in their lives even though they continually feel tense. If they do give this factor consideration, it is because they

have been stricken by grave mental problems. Again, it is the young people who are leading the old on a positive path to mental peace, for they have universally adopted meditation and other yoga practices as being a necessary part of the daily routine.

What about the spiritual side of life? While older people have accepted the religious ideas handed down through the ages without really understanding their basis, or rejecting religion as being rubbish, as seems to be the modern trend, young people have again taken the initiative. They have started to try to experience the truths inherent in all religions. They have not accepted nor have they rejected religion. They have, in fact, adopted a more scientific approach by trying to find the truth by practical methods. In this endeavour they have taken to the techniques of yoga.

Why do the young behave in a crazy way?

I once talked to a young man who told me he did not feel he could see his place in society. Already at the age of eighteen his parents had disowned him because of his rebellious nature. He told me that he did many crazy things with his friends for no other reason than that he could not see why he shouldn't do them. He told me that he was looking for something, though he did not know what. All his actions were an attempt to express some inner feeling.

He felt there was a permanent, universally correct action for each individual, but he could not find what it was. He looked around and saw hypocrisy. People were not doing what their nature dictated, their dharma, but were doing things in life that did not come from their inner being, doing things automatically, like a machine, because their neighbours expected them to do a particular action. He felt that people were continually suppressed because they were always acting in their lives to impress the people around them.

It was in reaction to this way of life that most people lived that he had done crazy things, as he put it. He said that he had heard that yoga is a method of knowing the inner nature

and so attaining happiness. Was it true? I told him it was perfectly true. I told him that if he wanted to know more and practise yoga he should go to a yoga school, the address of which I gave him.

I met that same young man six months later. I didn't ask him if he had been doing yoga; I could see it on his face. He said that yoga had changed his whole life, and now he knew in a small way that there was one truth underlying everything that was devoid of hypocrisy and superficiality. He was now on good terms with his parents and was trying to convince them to change their attitude to life, and to persuade them to do yoga.

Why should everyone practise yoga?

Imagine what would happen if yoga were taught in every school in the world, just as we teach mathematics or science. When we consider that about sixty percent of the world's population are children the implications are staggering. Young people everywhere would be well adjusted, healthy and happy, perceptive and understanding, as well as physically and mentally fit. They would be aware of their potential and more capable of its realization.

With their spiritual experience, they would be able to operate on a different and higher level of consciousness and this could be brought to use in their outer lives, in their work and social pursuits. Yoga encourages service and this could be used for the greater benefit of humankind. With yoga on the curriculum of universities and colleges, more qualified graduates would be produced who would be more perceptive in applying their intelligence to work.

Everyone should invest in yoga, young and old. The young people of the world need a system such as yoga. Yoga means union and that is just what we could achieve, a union of people throughout the world. Through yoga everyone would gain insight into their own culture and their way of life to a level never before believed possible. Such is the power of yoga.

It is not a religion, but a science of living according to our means and to the laws of life. If we hold ourselves responsible for the future, our own and that of our children, we must ensure that the evolution of man is moving along positive lines. Only then will wars cease; only then will man be able to love his fellow man, and only then will the old understand the young and the young understand the old.



17

Mantra Yoga

Chhattisgarh Yoga Seminar, Korba, 17 February 1974

What are the origins of mantra?

Today I want to explain to you a little about the science of mantra yoga. The mantra shastra is a deep and great science which, if understood correctly, can give you victory over your lower nature. Mantra shastra is very ancient, and in previous ages people knew this science well. Recently, however, people's faith in mantra shastra has lessened and gradually this knowledge has become hidden to such an extent that nowadays anything is said in the name of mantra. Therefore, it has become necessary to clarify this science for the sake of spiritual aspirants.

Mankind's most ancient scriptures are the tantra shastras and after the tantras, the Vedas took birth. From the tantras, the mantra shastra has come. The mantra shastra was not written like any ordinary type of book. There were ancient rishis, munis and sages, who had the actual realization of mantra. In meditation, when the rishis were able to transcend the material consciousness, rising to a high level, those sounds heard by them in that highest state were called *mantra*. To make it more clear to you, if you just make up some syllables in your mind and repeat them, it is not mantra. However, when those rishis and munis, whose souls were purified, through meditation, established their

consciousness at a high level beyond the mind, the sound perceived by them, in that state, was called mantra.

The rishis had the experience of mantra at three different levels or planes of consciousness. When the consciousness passes from the gross body into the subtle body, the sound perceived at that time makes one collection. The mantras heard in the subtle body form another group, and when the consciousness enters from the subtle body into the third or causal body, certain mantras realized at that time form a third group.

What are the different levels of consciousness?

I want you to understand what is meant here by first body, second body and third body. When I say body, I do not mean only the body form, rather I mean body consciousness, that body through which your consciousness is functioning. When the body consciousness is realized through the medium of five gross senses, it is called the gross body consciousness, the first body where your mind, intellect and memory are working.

What is the second body? When you practise meditation, your awareness travels deep inside, and in that inner meditation you begin to see beautiful visions and dreams. That which is called the second body is, therefore, not something tangible. It is the subtle or astral body, the *sukshma sharira*, the psychic consciousness, or the subconscious body. That is the second plane of consciousness.

What is known as the third body? When meditation becomes deeper and deeper, the state of void or *shoonya* comes. There is no awareness of external or internal. It is the experience of the dark night of the soul, like midnight, formless, sightless, where there is no awareness of 'I'. That is called the third body, the causal body, the *karana sharira*, or unconscious body. In the Vedas it has been called *hiranyagarbha*, the golden womb. There are many names given to it by psychologists too.

There is a fourth level of consciousness which is transcendental. In the third and fourth levels of consciousness, the awareness of the external world is absent. There is no awareness of my old name, my old form, but there is the experience of the eternal self, *akhanda swaroopa*. This is the fourth level of consciousness called *samadhi* or *turiya*, and many other names.

These different levels of consciousness have been indicated in the Gayatri mantra. *Om Bhur; Om Bhuvaha, Om Swaha, Om Maha, Om Janaha, Om Tapaha, Om Satyam, Om Tat Savitur Varennyam Bhargo Devasya Dhimahi Dhiyo Yonaha Prachodayat.* *Om Bhur* is the first body, *bhur loka* or the material plane; *Om Bhuvaha*, the second body, the intermediate or astral plane; *Om Swaha*, the third body, the heavenly or divine plane. After this the following mantras come in the fourth body – *maha loka, jano loka, tapo loka* and *satya loka*. I do not mean material worlds, but rather planes of consciousness.

What are revealed sounds and scriptures?

As the rishis sat in meditation, at higher levels, they received the sounds known as mantra. For this reason the mantras are not a creation of the human mind, they were not made by any man but rather they were received from higher sources. Just as in the religion of Islam, it is said that the Koran was revealed by God. This means that whoever received the Koran had attained a very high yogic state.

In the same way the Christians speak of the Bible as a revealed scripture. Our own *sanatana dharma*, the eternal religion of the Hindus and the vedic religion, is understood as having been revealed to mankind. The Vedas were not written by man. This does not mean that the pen which wrote them was held in God's hand; it only means that they were revealed to the rishis in the transcendental state. The same is also said about the *Ramacharitamanas*.

What are bija mantras?

Of all the types of mantra explained so far, the first and the highest is *Om*. *Om* is the seed or *bija mantra* of all the mantras. The rishis realized this cosmic *Om* in the highest planes of consciousness, in the state of self-realization, *atma sakshatkar*. All the mantras in existence have come from *Om*. It is composed of three sounds, A, U and M. This *Om* is found in all societies and in all religions, in one form or another, whether Christian or Muslim. *Om* is the foremost of mantras.

First comes *Om* and after it the mantras of Gayatri. The twenty-four syllables of Gayatri plus *Om* should be known as the original Gayatri mantra. The vedic rishis who received this mantra were also established at a very high level of consciousness.

Following this are the mantras pertaining to the third body, the unconscious body, which are also known as bija mantras. We call them potential mantras, because they contain dormant, potential energy of different forces. Each of the powers or forces in the world has its own bija mantra, such as *Aim* for Saraswati, *Shreem* for Lakshmi, *Kleem*, *Kreem*, *Hreem*, and so on. All the short, seemingly meaningless mantras which you might have heard are called bija mantras.

Those bija mantras are just like little bombs, the type of time bomb which explodes just at the right moment. Just as you plant a seed in the earth and from that a giant tree grows up, giving thousands of fruits, such is the power of the bija mantra. With the practice of *anushthana*, prolonged mantra repetition for a fixed period of time and number of malas, and regular sadhana, the power of the mantra is awakened. When that power is awakened, the consciousness takes the form of the mantra and then the real work of the mantra begins.

What is the power of mantra?

Please, remember one thing. There is much criticism of our religion, the objection being that in Hinduism, there is a

pantheon of gods and goddesses. I will tell you in the words of a scientist, that *shakti*, energy, is not only of one type. It has innumerable forms. Although the primal shakti, the root shakti, is one, its manifestations are endless. That is why we worship Devi in so many different forms.

The same principle is found in science. When electricity is flowing from one central circuit, the amplifier, tape recorder and all the appliances are working. The same energy which gives heat from the heater, gives coolness from the fan. These are the varied manifestations of one energy. The truth is that shakti is not just of one kind. Intellect is one shakti, memory is another shakti. Speech, prana, knowledge, are all shaktis, without which we cannot exist. That is why there are different bija mantras to awaken the different powers.

For example, take *vidya shakti*, the power of knowledge. It is in the form of Saraswati. I am not talking of the goddess Saraswati whose idol is worshipped in the temple, but I mean that energy, that shakti which is within us in the form of vidya or Saraswati. What is the way to awaken this energy? Of all the methods given, the best is to take the bija mantra of that shakti and to awaken its sleeping potential.

There are many other types of shaktis pertaining to the body, to disease, even to snake poison, and so on. The Mahamrityunjaya mantra is:

*Om tryambakam yajamahe sugandhim pushtivardhanam,
Urvarukamiva bandhanat mrityormukshiyamamritat,*

In many diseases, if its japa anushthana is performed, the power of the mantra is awakened internally, giving the desired result. By the practice of mantra japa, the aspirant's conscious will is awakened and through his willpower everything is accomplished.

How should a yantra be used?

All the bija mantras must be practised strictly according to certain rules and regulations. They should not be practised just from a book. Anushthana should only be undertaken

after understanding the purpose and necessity of the bija mantras well. On this subject, it is explained in the tantra shastras, that firstly a *yantra* or mystic diagram, should be made and within that *yantra* the bija mantra should be written, for example, the mantra *Sri*.

Sri is the mantra of Lakshmi, the goddess of prosperity. If you want to make Sri Yantra, the best way is to carve it on crystal. This is called Sri Chakra. In the south of India and in Orissa, one can find this Sri Chakra. However, crystal is very rare and not everyone can obtain it, therefore, Sri Chakra is also made on copper. Inside that, the mantra *Sri* is written and the anushtana is performed. This is just one example of the many mantras which can be installed in the *yantra*. However, please remember that the anushtana of the bija mantras should never be practised in a careless manner.

What are the benefits of mantra?

Next comes the group of mantras pertaining to the second body, like *Om Namah Shivaya*, *Sri Ram*, *Hari Krishna*. Anyone with faith may practise japa of these mantras.

What can be accomplished by the use of mantra? What benefits can be gained from them? Every person should have a mantra for himself. You cannot decide on your mantra independently, you must seek help from someone. After deciding your mantra, japa must be practised daily with complete discipline. Once you decide to do nine malas of japa a day, it is important to do nine malas, or if you decide on twelve malas, you should be regular with that number.

Different mantras have different benefits. All those who practise japa of Gayatri mantra will find it beneficial for health and intellect. In my own experience, those who suffer from skin diseases or iron deficiency are helped by *Surya* or sun mantras. For the skin diseases, such as eczema, and leucoderma, anushtana of the sun mantras is beneficial if it is practised properly.

Through mantra, one can remove disease, sorrow and restlessness. Mantra is so powerful that within a moment one

can change bad habits. It is important for people to study and understand this science in the correct way.

What is the power of tantric mantras?

I will tell you about an experience I had in my childhood. It was in Allahabad, when I was only seven or eight years old. I happened to see two Muslims playing with a snake. Just as I was passing, I saw one man make a circle on the ground with a stick. In that circle was a first class snake, a big cobra. The cobra belonged to the snake charmer and there was some kind of argument between him and the other man.

Being young I could not follow their words completely. It was all mantra-tantra business. The other man said, "I will see how your snake will get out of the circle!" Taking a stick he drew one or two more lines, and the snake just sat there. It came just to the line, then turned back again. I was just watching all this, not understanding anything. I asked the man what was happening. He told me, "I have thrown mantras on all four sides of the snake, so now it cannot come out."

I saw them fighting together. One wanted to throw grains of rice or dal on the other, but he didn't throw them for fear the other man would also throw some rice on him. Rice is a medium. Therefore, they circled each other trying to throw the rice for about ten or fifteen minutes. At last a big crowd gathered bringing their tantric battle to an end and the cobra was released.

This incident stuck in my mind for many days, but then I forgot about it. I grew up and as a Hindu boy received the sacred thread, went on with my work and the curiosity I once had about mantra disappeared.

I came to my guru's ashram in Rishikesh, in 1943, it was on the banks of the Ganga River, surrounded on all sides by dense jungle, where at night one's step might fall on a scorpion. An American family came to stay at the ashram, a husband, wife and two children. One day, the small girl was stung so severely by a scorpion that it seemed she would die within ten minutes.

The scorpion sting is very painful. I know because I was also stung once. At that time a person completely forgets about his social status and cries like a child. Even the strongest man who can lift 120 kilos or swim the current of Ganga for three hours, will lose his strength and weep for the whole night. So you can imagine how that girl was crying. I thought she would surely die.

Next to the ashram was a police station and from there somebody brought a constable. He brought a small knife with him and with that knife he removed the poison in five minutes. In another five minutes the girl was completely normal. I asked, "What mantra have you used?" He said, "Kali, Calcutta wali." The goddess Kali is the patron deity of Calcutta. I was very surprised.

I was raised by Arya Samajis, a sect which does not accept the concept of personal gods and goddesses. I was educated at a Christian convent school and many close relatives at home were Muslims. When I heard the name of 'Kali, Calcutta wali', my entire faith was shaken. I said, "Oh, I know Kali, Calcutta wali. Kali is just a name and Calcutta is a place, so how could poison be removed just by repeating those words?"

How can the mantra be awakened?

Gradually my attention was caught and I asked many people and started to read books about tantra and to practise mantra anushthana myself. Since then, I have had so many experiences, so many wonderful benefits, that it is not even possible to relate them. I want to explain that those words, 'Kali, Calcutta wali' may seem completely simple and ordinary to us, but for the man who has realized them, they are not ordinary at all. Those sounds which the rishis realized are not only simple words but syllables full of power. That is why we say sound, *shabda*, is Brahman, Supreme Consciousness. There is power in the mantra and to awaken this power, everyone should find a method within oneself.

I will give you one suggestion. One should have one's own mantra and practise japa with complete regularity for fifteen minutes or half an hour daily. Concentration is not necessary for japa. At the time of mantra japa, concentration of the mind is not important, but what is important is faith and belief. If your faith is weak and your concentration is strong, you will not attain the power of the mantra. If your concentration is weak, your mind running here and there, but your faith and devotion unshakeable, the mantra will awaken soon within you. For this reason, a lot of emphasis is placed on faith and devotion in mantra shastra.

There are two forces, two powers in the mantra. One is the power of consciousness, *Shiva* or what is called *purusha*. The other is the force of nature, matter or *prakriti*. Through sadhana, these two forces are awakened and often when awakened they will continue to help you for your whole life. You might have heard the experience of many others regarding mantra, and I have told you my experience. Therefore, you must definitely try to bring the science of mantra into your own life.



18

Yoga for Better Politicians and a Better World

Bihar School of Yoga, Sivanandashram, Munger, 1974

Why should politicians practise yoga?

Once, while talking to a group of people, I said, “Politicians should do yoga.” For a short time the room was quiet. My companions didn’t know whether to disagree with me or nod their heads in agreement. Most of them made no response whatsoever as they had never really considered whether politicians should or shouldn’t do yoga. I am sure many of the people thought I was not serious. Yet I was never more serious in my life. Politicians should do yoga practices.

For too long people regarded politicians and yoga as not having any connection with each other. People have never seriously considered yoga to be useful to politicians. I would even go as far as to say that general opinion considered these two walks of life as being in opposition to each other.

Why is this so? Perhaps because yoga is generally associated with seclusion, people who avoid society and contribute nothing tangible to society, whereas politics is associated with people who are actively involved in influencing the lives of people in society. Of course, if this were the true picture, yoga and politics could have no possible common interest, but in fact, this is not a true picture. Yoga can be of invaluable use to politicians as it can be for everyone else in the world.

Politicians are the select few who guide the destiny of humankind. Since they are fallible, like the rest of us, sometimes they contribute in a positive manner, sometimes in a negative manner. Anything that helps to make the difficult work of politicians easier, and helps to make their decisions more correct and positive, can be of great benefit to the politicians themselves, as well as to the people whose lives they guide. One of these things is yoga.

How can yoga help?

Politics can be called the art of compromise. During the debate, when issues are discussed, a politician needs a clear logical mind in order to explain his case to other politicians or perhaps to the general public.

A person who can speak clearly is much more likely to influence his listeners than a person who confuses his ideas. This is where yoga is most useful. It relaxes the mind and allows the individual to propound his ideas with force and clarity. An hour's practice of yoga before debates or meetings can be of immense use and can help to influence the final outcome of political discussions.

I once met the Indian ambassador to Britain. He told me that he had been practising yoga for many years, and that he found it useful, not only for his own development, but also for his work. I asked if he would explain how it helped his work. He told me that much of his work was meeting diplomats from other countries to draft some kind of treaty which would benefit both countries. Behind some of these meetings there were often ulterior motives which were not admitted or discussed. By doing yoga practices before the meetings, he made his mind clear which heightened his faculties of intuition and understanding. In this way, he was able to detect what his companions really wanted. By listening to the way other people spoke, he could detect whether they were sincere or not, and therefore be able to represent his country more usefully.

Another example is illustrated by the case of a prominent British member of parliament, who regularly disappeared for a few minutes during stormy debates. Everyone thought that he was going to the toilet. What was he actually doing? Was he going to secret files concerning the debate? No, in fact, he would go to his office and do asanas, sirshasana in particular. By doing this he was able to refresh his brain, make it more aware and so be able to participate in the debate with more vitality and enthusiasm. He believed that, though he missed a few minutes of the debate, it was more than compensated for by the benefits obtained from sirshasana.

What was Mahatma Gandhi's strength?

Without a doubt the greatest politician of this century was Mahatma Gandhi. His political career and the work that he did is a shining symbol of what a man with high ideals, a one-pointed mind and love for his fellowmen can achieve. He is an example to all and to politicians in particular. He represents the heights that man can achieve with a unified body, mind and soul. He was a yogi in the full sense of the word. He didn't hide himself away from society, but he immersed himself among people and dedicated himself to serving them through karma yoga.

He practised mouna, mantra and fasting. He regularly underwent tapasya and he ate simple food. He practised kriya yoga, as taught to him by Paramahansa Yogananda. He inspired everyone because he practised what he preached. He didn't urge people to do something and do the exact opposite himself. In this way, how could he fail to inspire everyone?

He was highly educated, but could he have achieved his great feats through merely having highly developed intellectual faculties? The answer is definitely no. Many other people have had, or have, equally good intellects and yet they do not inspire or help people as Gandhiji did. The attribute that made him rise above other people was his

glowing love of people and, in fact, everything that existed, even his political opponents.

By practising his sadhana, he was able to purify his mind of the dross that clutters most people's minds, such things as personal likes, dislikes, prejudices, fears. By removing these personal complexes, he was able to view the problems of India and his fellowmen with a mind that only considered the facts of the situation without the influence of personal whims.

This kind of mind is like a magnifying glass. It is able to see all the objects that it views with incredible clarity. A mind that is cluttered with inner complexes and personal fancies is like a magnifying glass that is misted over. The true picture of the objects is still there but they are not seen clearly.

It is sad, but nevertheless true, that the majority of decisions in the world, at high and low levels, are clouded by personal enmities and friendships. This was also where Gandhiji's strength lay. He had no real personal friends in the normal sense of the word. All people were his friends, even his enemies, in a universal sense. Everyone was his brother. None of his actions were done as a favour to a friend, but in order to benefit people in general.

Some people would say he was very stubborn but, in fact, he did things because he knew his own mind. He could understand the workings of other people's minds and the world situation in its true light and not in a reflected light. A politician, who has a strong mind yet shows deep and sincere compassion for all, is surely a person who will win the hearts and following of the general public.

What has to be added to a concentrated mind?

Is it possible for other people to develop a one-pointed mind and to awaken intuitive faculties? The answer is most definitely yes. Any politician can develop the greatness of Gandhiji if he cares to do yoga sadhana, as Gandhiji did. The method is available in yoga. The only further necessity is the interest of the politician to develop his inner capabilities. By interest I don't mean intellectual or half-hearted interest,

but interest that comes from the very core of the being and from the heart.

Mahatma Gandhi had a balanced mind, and therefore he did incredible amounts of work, both efficiently and without leaving things half done. He never seemed to tire of his karma yoga, unlike other people who do a certain amount of work and then lose interest or become tired. Why was this? The answer again lies with the mind. A concentrated yet relaxed mind can do the most intense work for long periods of time without tiring. It doesn't become diverted by external distractions or inner disturbances. It remains focused on the work at hand.

Supplemented with bhakti yoga it gives force and one has a very powerful combination. Bhakti channels all the emotional energy into a positive direction instead of allowing it to be dissipated in all directions. Most of us waste our emotional energy in useless petty arguments, useless heated discussions about nothing. The energy goes everywhere and without much power. Sent in one direction this power has great force.

To this combination add one more thing, detachment, and the result, like Gandhiji's work, becomes irresistible. Detachment does not mean disdain or no interest in the things of the world. It is the attitude of the mind where, no matter what happens in the political life, it does not have negative repercussions resulting in mental disturbances. I do not say that you shouldn't care what you do, because you should do everything to the best of your ability, but you shouldn't allow external things to affect your mind and fill it with complexes. This attitude of mind is slowly but surely developed through yoga practices.

How can yoga create a better world?

What a wonderful place this world could be if everyone did yoga. What better way to convince people that yoga is useful than by politicians doing it themselves, for their own benefit and to act as a good example for others. Politicians are

influential people and if they started to earnestly do yoga, the general public would be sure to follow. This would in no small way reduce conflicts between politicians, between people in general and between countries. It could lead to the brotherhood of humankind.

Perhaps at some stage in the future the need for politicians will be greatly diminished. Many politicians will have no political work to do. Yoga might actually put many politicians out of work; though this is not such a bad thing in view of the benefits it would give humanity. So when I say that politicians should do yoga, I mean it sincerely. Yoga is not for the few favoured people who retire to the Himalayas. It is for everyone, and it is definitely for politicians.



19

The Development of Human Potential through Yoga

Bihar School of Yoga, Sivanandashram, Munger, 1974

What is awareness?

Yoga is a practice of unfoldment of different layers of awareness which man has inherited from his ancient forefathers. They call it human potential. I feel awareness means unfoldment and absolute manifestation of this human potential. How does human awareness manifest and what are its different graduations? What is its form? Sometimes it is felt that the whole mind works like magic, but it doesn't.

The awareness in every individual is all knowledge and all powerful. When you develop this awareness, it manifests within you in the form of energy, power and knowledge. Animals eat, sleep and move, but they are not aware of it. They lack the state of witnessing. The particular act of witnessing oneself is completely absent in them. If they became aware that they were doing something it would mean that they had developed this awareness.

A human being is born with awareness. He knows that he knows. He knows that he is living, working, full of pain and happiness. The awareness develops in him gradually, step by step. However, sometimes this awareness develops all of a sudden to such an extent that one just becomes aware of one's own self. One becomes aware of all that has been taking place in the body and in the different spheres

of one's psyche. One becomes aware of oneself like being aware of another person, and experiences two personalities. Of course, this is a supreme form of awareness.

How can awareness be developed?

This awareness moves from the physical plane to the mental plane, then to the psychic plane and onwards to the spiritual plane. There is a method, a process, by which the awareness within us can be freed from the shackles with which it is bound.

The awareness is dwelling in the body. It is integrated and mixed up with body awareness. We want to develop this awareness from the physical plane to the spiritual plane. You are aware of your body now. There is a faculty in you by which you become a witness of your physical being. You become a witness of the state of physical existence. This particular faculty, through which you are aware of yourself, must be completely separated. The act or process of separation must take place. It is a process by which the spiritual awareness, the fundamental higher awareness or pure awareness is separated from the lower or local forms of awareness. Pure awareness or the awareness that 'I am aware' is developed gradually, in stages, through a particular process.

In the development of this awareness what happens? The dormant potentialities express themselves. You do not have to run after them, as many have been doing. Even if you are not aware of the fact that these great powers or abilities are part of your being, you will develop them.

The path or method should be the correct method, theme or stage by stage program. It has happened that some people, having read literature on yoga, entered a process of disentangling the mind from awareness, and there they got into trouble. They have not separated the body idea. They have not separated the experiences of the senses. They just want to separate the mind idea from the faculty of awareness. In separating the mental awareness from the pure awareness, what happens? They become almost abnormal. This happens because people think that by separating mental awareness

from pure awareness, they will develop certain psychic powers such as telepathy and clairvoyance.

The path or method must be the correct one otherwise it will lead to great harm for the aspirant. The practice of clairvoyance or clairaudience is not just preliminary. Before this a lot of preparation must be done. The awareness is within us and is complete in itself. We only have to give it an opportunity to manifest.

If there are obstacles or hindrances, we have to remove them. The sun is shining, but we have cataracts in our eyes. We are unable to understand or see the light. We must remove the cataract so that we are able to see clearly. In the same way, the awareness which is in us, in all its fullness, has to manifest through our life, our body, our actions, in such a manner that we are able to behold it.

The supreme awareness is the secret of the great potential within us. According to certain branches of yoga, the vehicle of supreme awareness is a central nadi in the body, which has connections with different psychic centres, beginning at the base of the spinal cord and ascending to the centre of the brain. This nadi is known as sushumna. It is the channel which carries this supreme awareness. However, the subject of kundalini yoga, which deals with the awakening of sushumna and certain physical centres and glands responsible for the manifestation of supramental faculties, is a difficult matter. It needs careful guidance, discipline and a regulated lifestyle.

Another method is to become aware of certain factors by a continual process of self-observation. I feel that in this process there is a corresponding process of separation. The material aspect of the personality is slowly detached in our consciousness. There comes a time when we become absolutely aware and we remain aware, not of the physical body or the impressions of the mind, but of the supreme or pure awareness.

It takes time and it is not an easy method. During the stages of manifestation of awareness, the faculties inherent

in every individual express themselves in forms of mental, intellectual, psychic and spiritual experiences, and all these must be separated one by one.

What is the difference between yoga and hypnotism?

People have been thinking of yoga as a peculiar method where one either becomes capable of drinking nitric acid or walking over fire and water. Some have felt that yoga is a method by which the faculties undergo a stage of depression. Yoga has also been compared with hypnotism. The differences should be clearly understood. In hypnotism there is a process of diminishing consciousness, in yoga there is an expansion of consciousness.

When you practise yoga correctly you become unaware of the outer events and experiences, but proportionately the inner awareness becomes more expanded and more glorious. Sometimes it is felt that the awareness in the higher stages of meditation does not differ from the awareness you have now. Here the awareness has objects, sounds, and so on, for its experience, but in meditation the objects are absent, only the awareness is present. Here I am aware of all the external things, but there I am aware of my own self.

When the awareness of the body, mind and senses becomes fully developed, this awareness starts acting or operating in a different sphere. The body and mind become the vehicle, not the actor; the ego feeling of 'I' is completely annihilated. In this practice of yoga there is no possibility of hypnotizing oneself. When we undergo a process of hypnotism there is the extinction of individual awareness. The faculties are deprived of expansion and enlargement.

What do we do? First of all, we choose an object for ourselves. It may be subjective or objective. It can be a sound, a form, or an idea, in fact, it can be anything. During meditation we keep moving with it. We follow the object, image or theme, until we leave the body idea. The mind idea remains at first, but this too must be transcended. We keep transcending different spheres of our consciousness, one by

one. Ultimately, we come to a phase of consciousness which is devoid of all other bases, all other substrata. There is no basis for this awareness. This is what we mean by yoga, the communion of the individual self with the cosmic self, but at the same time, there is complete detachment, a complete departure from the outside world to an inner world.

Why and how should awareness be applied in daily life?

It is not sufficient to develop this inner awareness through meditation. It is necessary to apply it in day-to-day life, otherwise it is like making a bomb and keeping it in your room without making use of it. Through meditation, you heighten and purify your awareness, but when it comes to applying it in day-to-day living, you don't do it. Therefore, daily life and spiritual life become two different and contradictory realities. If you want your developed awareness to help you in your spiritual life as well as your material life, you must learn the method of taking a little energy from that fundamental source of awareness and putting it in touch with your daily activities, or you will never realize your full potential. In yoga, and other sciences pertaining to yoga, there are methods by which the supreme awareness can be applied to daily life.

The visions, the psychic experience seen during meditation are not everything. They are just indications of a growing concentration. They prove that your consciousness is transcending different dimensions and different stages of your being. Many spiritual aspirants, renunciates or householders, have gone deep within during meditation. Some of them lose complete awareness of the outer body. Yet they have not been able to accomplish anything. They have not been able to understand anything in life. If you tell them something, they forget. They lack the power of memory and the faculty of understanding. They have completely dimmed the power of constant awareness.

This happens because their day-to-day life: the life of the senses and the world, and their spiritual life, become

two different lives. Side by side with the practices of meditation there should be the practices of hatha yoga, bhakti yoga, jnana yoga and especially karma yoga. It is wrong to say that one has to practise karma yoga first and when one becomes expert in this, one takes to bhakti yoga or raja yoga. No, it is not like that. All these aspects of yoga should be practised together. It must also be understood how to practise them at the right time and in the right amount. The right duration, depth, intensity and emphasis has to be placed on each one.

If you are an emotional person and you do not know how to use your surplus emotions, you will take more to bhakti yoga. If you are predominantly psychic, greater emphasis will be on meditation. If you are rational by temperament, you will have to lay emphasis on jnana yoga. In this way karma yoga becomes important for all spiritual aspirants. It is not only because karma is necessary in order to earn one's livelihood, but karma is necessary to express the formless awareness, that pure awareness, in actual work.

I would like to convey to you that the root of power in man is awareness. If that particular awareness can be developed by gradual practice and effort, it will be possible for you to circulate, operate and correspond with the different spheres of reality: physical, mental, psychic and spiritual.

It sometimes happens that people develop a greater spiritual personality, so much so that they see divinity everywhere. They see oneness everywhere. It is a stage in spiritual life when they become aware of the oneness of everything. You may call it hallucination or a subjective idea, but it is pure consciousness. One does not find any difference between oneself and others. At that moment, the distinction between man and man fades away. One does not see the distinction between religions, races, colour, sex, groups, and so on. This is a great achievement for man and the greatest power that we can bring to this earth.

By which process will the psychic race come about?

There is a method known as kriya yoga that includes pranayama, mudras and bandhas, which seems to have helped people a great deal in the countries where it is being practised. In these countries a great change has taken place in the minds of people. People have become more psychic and I clearly visualize the coming of a psychic race. Sri Aurobindo used to talk of this supramental race.

Man is now operating on a different plane. A few centuries ago he was operating on a physical plane or sensual plane. He then began to operate on the intellectual plane. Wherever people are practising yoga, they have begun to think in the way yogis of ancient times used to think. This will bring a civilization where perhaps millions of people will develop psychic faculties. I do not mean clairvoyance and clairaudience, but a state of consciousness from which one can act in this world.

Lord Buddha, Christ, Mohammed and many other saints, worked in this world. The great emperor Marcus Aurelius and King Janaka of India also worked in the world. They did not work from the physical or intellectual plane. They operated through the psychic or spiritual consciousness. This is how they could understand things much better than we can today.

Scientists, for instance, sometimes have flashes of inspiration or intuition. Where does it come from? It comes from within. At the time of these flashes of inspiration, their personality and individuality are working on a different plane. This is going to happen to the majority of humanity in the time to come and the period has already started.

When we are discussing yoga and the human potential, it is necessary for all of us to start operating on a different level, higher than the intellect. Intellect was a helper, but now it is a barrier. It must be transcended. Intellect has its own glories, but a time comes when the intellect becomes confused. It cannot understand everything, for its basis of understanding is logic. It needs certain authorities. Before we transcend the

intellect, let us take a step into the psychic plane, for once we are devoid of intellectual understanding and psychic faculties take over, we may be individuals of nowhere.

When you practise yoga, you should also study the scriptures and, most important, everyone should practise karma yoga. This is so that your spiritual powers and accomplishments may find a source or channel of expression. Many great saints, sannyasins and seers, who had achieved realization of that pure awareness, came into society. They gave something to society through their spiritual understanding.

The time has come when the world will change. The emphasis on material things will diminish, and more emphasis will be put on a higher, spiritual life. This can be realized through yoga. When awareness grows, man's thoughts, concepts and values also change. If humanity as a whole is going to change, due to time, due to destiny, or through certain practices; we are heading into the era of the psychic, the supramental race.

Before this psychic race is accomplished, man will have to fight a grim battle with himself. The psychic race will not be established so easily. One has to be careful because the first explosion or awakening of the psychic consciousness is complete anarchy, a complete non-acceptance of material values, complete detachment from the established values of life.

When practising spiritual life, when the development of awareness takes place, we come to a point when we think, "What is all this nonsense?" Of course, the time also comes when the balance returns. This balance must be brought about through evolution or through the practice of yoga.

Even if we do not practise yoga, the process of unfoldment of awareness is going to take place, and it is taking place. From the beginning of time to this day, awareness has evolved through the laws of nature. Nature's scheme is that all men shall rise above instinct. The consciousness shall rise above instinct, above the body, senses, mind and intellect. Ultimately, it will operate on a higher level. This higher level is the spiritual level, the level of yoga.

20

Sadhana and Swabhava

Bihar School of Yoga, Sivanandashram, Munger, 1974

What happens when the mind becomes introverted?

In yoga, introversion is known as *antar mukha*. There are two types of introversion, *vishayakara vritti* and *brahmakara vritti*. *Vishayakara vritti* means the tendencies of the mind in the frame of sensuality. During introversion the mind and its patterns assume the shape of the *vishayas*, the sensual objects. In *brahmakara vritti*, the mind and its patterns assume the shape of *Brahman*, that is the cosmic awareness, the divine awareness, God awareness or spiritual awareness.

When the person whose mind is in the frame of *vishaya* becomes introvert, he is the loser and society is the loser. He achieves nothing. He comes out only to balance his psychological state. If I lie down in the dark and become ecstatic and jump around and talk a lot, I am only trying to balance my nervous and psychological reactions. However, when one who has developed the *brahmakara vritti*, the spiritual awareness becomes introverted, he comes out with jewels, valuable ideas, philosophies, accurate decisions, and so on.

Introversion has to be defined. Is it the introversion of a man who is in *brahmakara vritti* or is this the introversion of a person who is in *vishayakara vritti*? The mental tendencies must remain in the frame of spiritual consciousness and then

this *antar mukha vritti*, introverted tendency, becomes the most precious vritti. If a spiritual-minded person becomes antar mukha, his senses are withdrawn, he is not the loser and society is not the loser. However, if an unevolved person, who has not worked through his emotions and passions – hatred and jealousy, raga and dwesha – somehow, due to some shock, neurosis, deep-rooted attachment, or sensual passions, becomes introverted, he reverts to darkness. He is the first loser, his family is the second loser and society is the third loser.

A clear distinction has to be made between the introverted personality and introversion in the spiritual personality. There are people who live in fantasies. They may have fantasies for money, enjoyment, name and fame, or anything. They live in a world of their own. That is not brahmakara vritti, that is vishayakara vritti, as their mind is assuming the shape of enjoyment, or ordinary sensual enjoyments. In yoga it is antar mukha vritti in relation to brahmakara vritti that we are emphasizing. We are not emphasizing antar mukha vritti in relation to vishayakara vritti.

In the morning just as the sun comes up over the horizon, if you stare at it and close your eyes, you see an after image. Can this be used for creating a bindu?

The bindu is always there. It will come. You can see it in the form of a seed or a star. The physical location is at the eyebrow centre, but in the psychic body there is no such point. You may see it anywhere, as the psychic body has a bigger dimension than the physical body. We have been taught that the supramental body is within this physical body. Is God in the body or is the body in God. Is the milk in the pot or the pot in the milk? The milk does not contain the vessel, but the vessel contains the milk. In the same way, the body is not the carrier of the mind but the mind is the carrier of the body.

After sadhana can you see the bindu?

Certainly. So far as the physical body is concerned certain location points are there. However, in the supramental body there are no location points for it is beyond that. You can see it wherever you like. The darkness and the light and the colours can be seen and are seen by different individuals depending on personal sadhana and swabhava. There are people in spiritual life who can perceive a sound much better than a colour and there are those who can perceive a colour or an object better than sound.

Can the swabhava be changed?

Swabhava is what you are, what you are born with. You can influence it by adding samskaras, but swabhava cannot be changed immediately. It takes much time. In principle it can be done, but in practice it is difficult.

What is your swabhava, what is your samskara and what is your dharma? According to your swabhava, you have your dharma. *Dharma* is not religion, but an expression of the swabhava. The dharma of fire is to burn; it is the swabhava of fire to burn, and therefore, its dharma is burning everything. *Samskara* is a process of refinement, when the fire will not only burn but can be used for some other purpose. Electricity can produce light in bulbs and it can also short-circuit and kill a person. You should not think about elimination or extermination of the swabhava, but rather you must try to influence it by samskara.

The mind is the vehicle. All the seeds of samskara can be seen in the mind. That is to say, whatever you want to do with yourself, you have to do with the mind, and whatever you are doing with the mind, you are doing with yourself, because that is what you are. However, if you try to change your swabhava, you may create mental problems with yourself. You may become two personalities: one you are born with and another you are trying to become. Therefore, the safest way is to change slowly, with the integration of samskara. Do not be completely antagonistic towards your swabhava.

You must have dharma, the expression is there. One well-known example of this is the poet Valmiki. He was a dacoit, but that was not his swabhava. His parents were dacoits, they had that tendency, so they made him a dacoit. Valmiki was a dacoit by samskara and not by swabhava. He was not a dacoit by nature, but his circumstances made him one. Therefore, his dharma, his expressions, became entirely different. His first dharma was to loot, kill and rob, but when he met Saptashringi his dharma was changed. He became a poet saint.

His swabhava must have been the swabhava of a great saint. Due to his birth in a family which had its own moral, social and philosophical limitations, he developed into a dacoit, but he was not meant for that. Therefore, it is always good to imbibe more samskara for a better dharma in your life.

According to certain philosophers, one is not born with a swabhava, but one acquires it in the first two years of life. That swabhava stays for the whole lifetime. It is said that by samskara one can superimpose that personality and bring about correction.

Yes, that is what is said. However, what happens to his parentage? What happens to what he has brought with him from his previous life? It is forgotten and is in a potential dormant state, but anything that has a dormant potential is not dead. It can come to the point of fructification at any time, in any situation. A person is born with karmas from his previous life. Definitely he has brought plenty of inherited stuff from his parents and ancestors within his DNA molecules.

I have brought some very powerful karmas from my parents and forefathers through my unconscious body. I have forgotten them. Up to the age of two, the situation in which I was brought up had a great impact on my life. Sometimes the influence during these two years is in complete agreement with what I have inherited and at times it is absolutely

against the inheritance. That is how the personalities are made during the first two years of life. There is a struggle and conflict between swabhava and samskara.

In many cases, the swabhava which is inherited from one's parentage comes into conflict with one's innate swabhava. There is conflict between this personality and the personality which has been imposed on me by my parents and family. If the two are in complete agreement, a harmonious reaction is bound to take place. If they are in complete disagreement, something else can happen.

That is why it happens that in many families the father is absolutely sattwic and the son is uncontrollable. In other families, the father is a drunkard, criminal and debauched, while the son is perfect and well-behaved. This is how conflicts arise within the family and bring about amazing reactions.

If there are four or five brothers of the same parentage and qualities, they can be entirely different personalities although they have been brought up almost in the same environment.

Five children are born during a period of ten years, each will definitely carry a different personality. The personality cannot be the same in physical structure, emotional structure or philosophical structure. It is not always true that swabhava and samskara will have the same reaction. An individual is more than what he has inherited from his parentage and samskaras. There is something more in an individual, that is his spiritual personality, his *jivatma*, and according to that the actions and reactions take place in him.

I will tell you about myself and my brother – two completely different natures. My father was very consistent in his life, an Arya Samajist to the core. My mother had the same personality, but the children were completely different. There was four years difference between myself and my brother, and the admonitions from our parents were the same throughout, the same Arya Samajist traditions.

My father used to talk about the glory of sannyasa all the time and my brother didn't want any part of it, but I was interested. My sister was never admonished by my parents. At that time, she hadn't started talking about sannyasa, but she became a sannyasin much before my father started talking about it.

His subconscious mind came out through her. She did not become a Hindu sannyasin, but she became a nun of her own accord. He was not aware that what was in his mind was affecting her; but by the time she grew up, he was talking about sannyasa, this swami and that swami, all the time. Our reactions were entirely different. My brother did not like the idea of sannyasa at all, but I followed it. In this case we have to examine another cause and that is the previous birth. I was ready for it and he was not.

Is the mental state of the parents at the time of conception important in the psychological framework of the child?

It is important, also the chemical properties, the structure and the condition of the womb. The date is also influential, whether it is *krishna paksha* or *shukla paksha*, the dark or light phase of the moon. Even the food which the father and mother were eating is important. There are many causes behind the differences and similarities of children. You cannot say that the nature of the parents alone is responsible. They may have a certain nature, but from the moment of conception the child will be different.

A dacoit may have a saintly son because at that particular moment he may have been thinking like a sadhu. For a period of time he might have been influenced by some figures like mahatmas or devatas, and at that moment the son might have been conceived.

We all know the story of Prahlad who was born saintly and devoted to God, to the chagrin of this father who was a rakshasa unable to bear the sound of God's name. His father would say, "There is no God, I don't care if you sing, but don't sing his name!"

His negation was a kind of assertion and this was inherited by Prahlad. When he was in the womb, Prahlad's mother also received some religious teachings. Therefore, when the son was born, he was the reverse of his father's negation, the other side of the coin.

There are some references in the Upanishads and Puranas to certain religious ceremonies, spiritual attitudes, mantras and food, for facilitating the right type of conception, but these things are completely forgotten by us now.



21

The Science of Tantra for Modern Man

Bihar School of Yoga, Sivanandashram, Munger, 1975

What is tantra?

Tantra is a great science that has been misinterpreted in recent years. It has come to mean something forbidden, something evil, which should not be practised by normal people. Yet, in fact, tantra is a most useful and important practice as far as the evolution of consciousness, the collective consciousness of humankind, is concerned. It is also a practical system for giving good physical and mental health and curing many kinds of illnesses. As such it is a suitable system for the people of today.

More than 2,500 years ago, before Lord Buddha, there existed a science in India which was widely adopted and practised by the people, not to renounce the world but in order to experience the world more fully. That science was known as tantra and it was developed to a high degree of perfection. The ancient people of India used this spiritual science in order to remove the frustrations of man and to prevent the accumulation of inhibition and complexes.

In the world today there is a great demand for psychologists because there is some error in our way of thinking, something wrong with our basic philosophy of life. Why should we feel guilty when we are not guilty? Why do we feel inhibited when there is no reason to be inhibited? Tantra,

whatever people may think, is a system which, if correctly followed, would improve the mental conditioning in the world to such an extent that hundreds of thousands of neurotics would not need to go to mental hospitals. Errors in behaviour and personality which are so prevalent throughout the world would not exist.

Man has suffered for thousands of years and it is because of wrong or perhaps misguided thinking. Tantra tackles the problems of man through the method of mantra, yantra and other techniques which dive deep into the subconscious mind and remove the dross that exists there.

How is tantra related to yoga? Yoga is reasonably well publicized and known by many people, yet tantra is wrapped in a veil of mystery. This should not be the case. In fact, yoga and tantra are only different words belonging to the same way of life. All the practices of yoga such as asana, pranayama, kundalini yoga, hatha yoga, mantra yoga, kriya yoga, originated from and are included in tantra.

People think that the whole science of yoga originated from Samkhya, yet most of the practices came from tantra. Even the words yoga and tantra mean the same thing; both mean to expand the consciousness, and then to liberate it. Yet if you ask yoga teachers, “Do you teach tantra?” They will immediately answer, “No.” Everyone is scared to mention the word tantra, even though it is the basis of Indian culture and yoga is the offshoot.

What is the use of mantra in tantra?

Mantra techniques are the most important part of tantra. Through the use of mantra, the mind and the consciousness are allowed to expand. A mantra is not necessarily a name of a god or goddess – in tantra it is a word or syllable which is a symbol of consciousness. Every sound is in fact the symbol of consciousness and a mantra is the compiled form.

These mantras represent different elements and bodies, different psychic systems, and they make up the entire complex of the brain and nervous system. It is the strength

of the sound, the colour, frequency, velocity and temperature of the sound, which is responsible for the awakening that takes place in the deeper realms of the brain and the human consciousness. The mantra can be used in different ways. It can be practised in conjunction with the breath, in the psychic passage, at the eyebrow centre, and so on. Tantra is powerful in the field of healing and it is through the mantras that a patient is cured.

How does tantra differ from yoga?

The difference is small. Yoga tends to impose restrictions on the individual, whereas in tantra there are absolutely no restrictions whatsoever. Yoga suggests that people eat a vegetarian diet if they want the best progress. Tantra, on the other hand, makes no stipulations and does not ask you to change your external life. Tantra has great respect for human weaknesses. It does not ask anyone to make a departure from their status in life. In most cases, if people start imposing restrictions on themselves, they will probably do more harm than good.

Tantra, more than any other system in the world, accepts every action in life as being a manifestation of the collective nature, *prakriti*. Tantra accepts that everyone is not the same. Everyone is not capable of great austerity or acts of renunciation or living a rigid and regulated life. Yet, at the same time, all people have the right to become aware of the highest consciousness, the highest truth. The ultimate aim of tantra is to provide everyone with the practices, easy or difficult, according to one's particular social, moral and intellectual position, for spiritual realization, the fulfilment of personal self, and happiness in any situation. Tantra is the science of absolute surrender.

The mother aspect of the universe, which makes the consciousness function and active, is regarded as the greatest power. Matter and consciousness are functioning together in man as well as in the cosmos. Matter and consciousness produce creation and give the concept of time and space.

Matter is bound by consciousness and consciousness cannot function without matter. Therefore, it is written in *Saundarya Lahari*, one of the tantric texts, “How can Shiva function without Shakti?”

Consciousness is inherent in everyone, and it can be perceived in its qualified or limited form. The sensual dimension, the objective dimension of consciousness can be perceived, for example, when you listen to someone speaking. The subjective dimensions are those which manifest during dreams. Sleep is the unconscious dimension. Sleep, dream and the waking state are different manifestations of consciousness. This inherent consciousness in every man has to be realized in its unqualified state, which we know as pure consciousness, *purusha* or *atma*.

This realization is not easy for most people because of the disturbances of the mind and due to the fact that the consciousness is in the hold of nature, matter or *prakriti*. This matter is the mind, body, thoughts, experiences, remembrances, unconscious *samskaras*, and so on. This is the realm of matter which you have to transcend in order to come face to face with your own pure consciousness. *Tantra* is the way to expand your consciousness and liberate it, to release it from the hold of *prakriti* and from the realm of time and space.

What are the tools of tantra?

Besides mantra there are two other important things in tantra, they are yantra and mandala. A *yantra* is a kind of geometrical diagram. The *mandala* is the finalization, the discovery or realization of a particular yantra that suits your nature and which becomes a medium of conception.

The mantra, yantra and mandala were part of the ancient Kabbalah system in Judaism. They were prevalent in Europe in the mystic traditions prior to the advent of Christianity. They were popular in ancient Egypt, China, Tibet and Japan.

The yantras in tantra are generally geometrical, in the form of triangles, hexagons, octagons, and so on. In fact,

they can be almost any shape. For example, in ancient Egypt they were human and animal figures. They can also be the pictures of gods and goddesses, such as Durga, Kali, Hanuman and other aspects of the Hindu pantheon. These symbols and diagrams represent your deep, inner frustration, your subliminal mental problems which you do not know and which you will never know. It is impossible to know them. Even psychologists cannot tell you, because they have their own problems which they have to work out before they can work out yours.

These frustrations, these deep-rooted inhibitions, which psychologists have been talking about for the last seventy years and which tantra has been talking about for thousands of years, constitute the mental body of man. This mental body is responsible for all of man's problems and unhappiness. Most, if not all, of man's diseases are caused by deep-rooted mental problems. Even medical scientists are starting to propound this idea.

How shall we remove them? It is easier said than done. People do not know what they are suffering from, so how can they rectify the problems? The method is through tantra, by allowing the roots of suffering to be expressed through symbols or yantras.

You have to work out your problems by using yantras that suit your personality. After some time, fear complexes, suppressed ambitions, emotions, and so on, will be slowly eradicated from the mind. These latent impressions or *samskaras* will be worked out. This system in tantra allows people to project themselves into the symbolic yantra and so subtly ease the problems from the mind. Everyone should take more interest in tantra for this reason alone.

A thorough and careful study of the tantric system should be made, and it should be realized that yoga is no more than a part of the ancient system of tantra. Scientists have shown that there is a scientific basis behind the part of tantra known as yoga. Once all the prejudices are removed, there is no reason why scientists should not turn their

attention to tantra as a whole and prove that it also has scientific validity.

Tantra and yoga are brothers. They both lead to happiness, to spiritual development and realization. Everyone should practise one or both of them if they want to find out what this life is all about, and if they want to remove their mental and physical problems.



22

Hatha Yoga

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What is hatha yoga?

In Sanskrit, the word hatha is a combination of two syllables, *ha* and *tha* or *ham* and *tham*, and they represent the two systems of the body. This body is comprised of two forces, the mind and prana. If there is an imbalance between the mental energy and the vital energy, diseases take place. If the mind predominates and the pranas are weak, you become a mental patient. If the pranas are powerful and the mental energy becomes weak, you become a terrorist. You have too much anger and you become hyperactive. An imbalance between prana and the mind can cause many physical and mental disorders.

In hatha yoga you try to bring about harmony between these two principles, mind and prana, which are known as *ida* and *pingala*, and which correspond with the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems. This harmony is achieved by six kriyas. The first one is called *neti*. *Neti* means cleansing the nasal passages with water, a thread, milk, ghee or oil. *Neti* is most beneficial for all problems related with the eyes, ears, nose and throat.

The second kriya is called *dhauti* which means ‘to wash’, to wash the stomach. There are two ways of washing the stomach. One is with the help of a piece of cloth and

the other is by drinking warm, saline water. You wash the stomach in the early morning hours and remove the acidity that has accumulated there throughout the night. Sometimes there is one cup of fermented acid in the stomach and this can be removed by dhauti.

The third kriya is called basti. *Basti*, a yogic enema, is for those people who are suffering from fistula, gonorrhoea or venereal diseases. The fourth kriya is *kapalbhati* which is a kind of pranayama to purify the frontal brain. The fifth is *trataka*, gazing at one point with intense concentration. The sixth kriya is *navli*, segregating the abdominal muscles.

These six kriyas are actually known as hatha yoga. After you have purified and trained your body by these practices, you can take up asana, pranayama, concentration and meditation. This is hatha yoga. *Ha* represents the sun and *tha* the moon. Sun is prana and moon is mind.

How old is this branch of yoga?

It is as old as the most ancient vedic texts. If the vedic texts are five thousand years old, then yoga is at least that old. If the Vedas are 20,000 years old, then so is yoga. There is archaeological evidence that yoga was practised in many parts of the world in ancient times. I have travelled extensively in the South American countries, in Mexico, Colombia, Brazil, and I have found that in the pre-Colombian era, yoga was practised there.

In Colombia there is an extensive open air museum which displays many figures in yogic poses. You can see different statues practising pranayama, neti, uddiyana bandha, vajrasana, sarvangasana. These statues have survived from the pre-Colombian era. Similarly in Mexico many artefacts depicting the practices of yoga, which were known to the ancient civilizations can be found. Hatha yoga is a very old science.

I have come across many references which indicate the existence of a yogic culture more than 45,000 years ago. This culture spread throughout South America, coming to

Southern Europe, the Middle East, Afghanistan, India, and South East Asia including China and Japan. However, many disasters occurred, internal as well as global, and gradually this culture was lost.

Can asana and pranayama be started straight away?

Before starting the practices, you have to prepare yourself. Unless you practise pawanmuktasana and the purification kriyas of hatha yoga, you will not be able to do the asanas and pranayamas, or you may do them wrongly. Of course, in every science there are ways and means to indicate this. If you practise pranayama wrongly or if you overdo it, you will get a notice to stop the practice. Therefore, it is said that if you want to learn yoga, you should learn from someone who knows it well and will be able to prepare you properly.

Does the practice of yoga reduce body weight?

Yoga reduces the weight of the body and also the weight of the mind. Most of you are only concerned with the reduction of physical weight. You are not concerned with the reduction of psychic weight. There are exercises by which you can reduce obesity. Often obesity is related with glandular imbalance. When the mind is free from complexes and tensions, and the pituitary gland is functioning normally, the hormones responsible for maintaining correct body weight are secreted.

Actually the pituitary gland is the master gland and it secretes about twenty-four groups of hormones, each of them having their own bearing and influence on the other endocrine glands. Some of them do control the body weight directly or indirectly. If there is any kind of depression or suppression in the nervous system, which controls the hormone secretion, naturally the body weight of the individual will be affected. Either overweight or underweight will occur. First of all a healthy pituitary has to be developed by the practice of yoga and then you will see the results for yourself.

When can children start yoga?

At the age of eight, but they should not start with asana, but with pranayama. We usually teach them pranayama and mantra first as their brain is still developing. Their mental faculties should be given a proper direction and they should not be suppressed. When children are growing mentally and intellectually, one must help them. The practice of pranayama will help to develop the inner faculties of the brain, the unseen faculties, and mantra will give them the power of concentration. After the age of twelve they can start surya namaskara and after sixteen they can decide what they will practise.

Why not start with the practices earlier, at pre-school age, four and a half or five years old?

No, the personality is not formed. The formation of the child's personality is completed at the age of seven. Therefore, yoga should begin after seven years.

Is nadi shodhana the only pranayama?

There are many kinds of pranayama. This pranayama is called *nadi shodhana* because it purifies the nervous system. There are other pranayamas, bhastrika and kapalbhata, which activate the nervous system. There are cooling pranayamas like kaki, sheetali and sheetkari. There are pranayamas for summer and winter. There are pranayamas for epilepsy, nervous depression and nervous breakdown, but nadi shodhana is the basic pranayama.

The alternate breathing cycle in nadi shodhana is also connected with the brain. When you breathe in through the left nostril, you are influencing the right hemisphere of the brain, and when you breathe through the right nostril, you are influencing the left hemisphere of the brain. Similarly, the left nostril influences the parasympathetic nervous system which is responsible for mental behaviour, and the right nostril influences the sympathetic nervous system which is responsible for vitality.

Before you begin pranayama, it is important that both nostrils flow freely. Usually either the right or the left nostril is flowing. Every one and a half hours the nasal cycle changes. As the nasal cycle changes, the brain cycle also changes. During the practice of pranayama and meditation, it is said that sushumna nadi must flow. *Sushumna* flows when both the left and the right nostril, ida and pingala, flow equally.

When sushumna flows, the brain is alert and the awareness is greater. When pingala is flowing, the awareness is less and the body functions are more. When ida is flowing, the functions of the mind are dominant and the body functions are depressed. When both ida and pingala flow equally, the two hemispheres of the brain become active simultaneously and so there is heightened awareness. You must practise nadi shodhana pranayama and you will experience this.

Does sushumna flow only due to pranayama?

It can flow by itself and by so many other ways. Sushumna can start to flow through the practice of asanas and the practice of relaxation in shavasana or yoga nidra, but if it does not come, nadi shodhana must be done. By doing alternate nostril breathing twenty-five times, sushumna becomes free. If sushumna becomes free without this practice, well and good, but usually it does not.

Sushumna may flow for a split second and when it flows you do not have to make any efforts to meditate. You close your eyes and you are in meditation. When pingala is flowing, no matter what you do, meditation will never take place, for the body is excited and agitated. When ida is flowing meditation will also not be successful as you will become introverted, you will have visions, you will have dreams, you will be drowsy and sluggish. When sushumna is flowing, there will be light inside and meditation will become spontaneous. That is why one who wants to meditate successfully should practise pranayama. By the practice of

pranayama, one should awaken sushumna, and meditation becomes automatic and easy.

While practising nadi shodhana, a whistling sound comes. What is that noise?

There is a pranayama with a whistling noise but not nadi shodhana. In nadi shodhana even the sound of the breath should not be heard by the practitioner himself. That is the finest pranayama. In bhastrika, sheetkari and bhrumari pranayama the sounds of bellows, hissing and humming are heard. There is a pranayama to expel heat from the body which sounds just like the panting of a dog.

Does married life bring any hindrance to the development of spiritual life?

Married life is a help and not a hindrance. In Indian culture marriage is a dharma and not a karma.

Then why did most of the maharishis not marry?

Who did not marry? Yajnavalkya was married, Sage Vasishtha was married. Most were married, but some did not approve of it so they did not marry. Buddha was also married, then he renounced.

Can sirshasana be practised later in life?

Sirshasana means standing on the head. Ten years ago an experiment was conducted on this. It was found that young people up to the age of thirty-five or forty can begin sirshasana at any time. Above forty-five you can continue sirshasana, but you should not begin it.

In sirshasana the ventilation of the brain and the consumption of oxygen are greatly reduced. Those who have a healthy constitution can do this practice. Even now I do sirshasana at the age of fifty-two, and there is no problem. I know other people who have practised sirshasana at the age of fifty or fifty five and they have benefited.

However, sirshasana is not the first asana to be practised. When the blood is purified, when the pranas are properly distributed throughout the body, when the purification of the nervous system has taken place, when the acidity has been removed, and all the other systems in the body are balanced, when you have practised sarvangasana and bhujangasana, surya namaskara and pranayama, then you can start sirshasana, even at the age of fifty.

However, if the body is not purified, if there are tensions in the body, a lot of cholesterol and foreign matter, if the nadis and the nervous system are not pure, if the stomach is heavily loaded, and the mucus membranes are dirty and decomposing, at that time it is better not to start sirshasana even at the age of twenty-five.

Which asanas can be done after the age of forty-five?

Most of the asanas have an immediate influence on the endocrine glands, so we suggest that you do only those which are beneficial for you. Sometimes people overdo yoga practices and force themselves into positions which their body is not ready for. If you cannot perform padmasana and you put your legs into it by force, you will have problems with your knees. If you cannot perform halasana or paschimottanasana and you force your body into it, certainly you are going to harm yourself. That is not doing the asana wrongly but forcibly.

In the *Yoga Sutras* (2:46) it is said: *Sthirasukhamasanam*. In a yoga posture there are two essential qualities that have to be maintained. The first is *sthairam*, steadiness. The body becomes steady; it does not tremble, sweat, or move. The second is *sukham*, a feeling of comfort, of pleasure. If it gives a feeling of pain, *dukkha*, it is not an asana, and if it is *asthairyam*, unsteady, it is also not an asana.

Yoga purifies the mind and leads to self-realization. Why is it that often the power attained from yoga is misused?

The power which is misused is a neutral power; it is faultless. You keep a gun, rifle or revolver in order to protect yourself;

you can also kill a man with it. How you use it has nothing to do with the gun itself. Likewise in yoga, when you practise you develop some psychic faculties and powers. Due to your individual nature or the force of circumstances, you misuse them. Therefore, in the practice of yoga, siddhis are not at all sought after. All great saints and sages have said time and again that siddhis should not be used; they should not even be demonstrated. Those who know this will not misuse them.

Do you believe that yoga has any connection with religion?

Literally, 're' means 'once again' and 'ligion' means 'connection'. Religion means getting oneself connected again. Yoga means what religion means, but practically religion has become a set of rituals, superstitions and communal feelings. If by religion you mean that, then certainly yoga does not mean religion. However, if by religion, you mean a process in which a person is returning from the external experiences to the self, then yoga means the same thing as religion.

This is a question which is often asked in the West also, but I always tell them that yoga is a science. One can prove what happens in deep meditation in the body, what happens to the inner body temperature, how does meditation influences longevity, what is the intensity of alpha waves in the brain, what is their amplitude and so on. All this can be proved. It is not superstition to say that the practice of meditation and pranayama will help you and free you from disease. If you do not believe in it you can challenge it and it can be proved. In religion there are many things which cannot be proved and which may not be beneficial at all. I am not against religion, but I feel that religion has been misrepresented and misunderstood.

23

Yoga – An Ancient and Universal Culture

Kumardhubi, January 1976

Yoga has immediate relevance in our day-to-day life, but it has been utterly neglected by other cultures for more than five centuries. As a result of that negligence, our society has had to pay a heavy cost. Today we are restless and suffering from psychosis and neurosis, which is reflected in the family life, community life and national life.

Yoga is my subject wherever I go. From my study of history, religion and civilization, I have found that yoga is an international culture which humankind has imbibed from ancient times. Only last year, when I visited Latin American countries, I went to a large and famous museum near Bogota in Colombia. I am personally interested in investigating the possibility of a universal culture, and with that intention, I have visited almost all the museums in the world.

From the paintings, designs and statues of what is called the pre-Colombian era, I realized that before the Colombian nation there existed a completely different culture there, and this ancient culture was based on yoga. In pre-Colombian art, there are statues of hatha yoga mudras, nadi shodhana pranayama, vajrasana, uddiyana bandha and vipareeta karani mudra. I have found these and many other yogic artefacts in the pre-Colombian

culture and in the pre-Christian culture also. Yoga has survived the ravages of time and will survive in coming generations.

Does yoga help one succeed in life?

The only drawback of this yogic culture is its disbelief in man's dependence on material things, and this is why other avenues of therapy have become so popular worldwide. Why has allopathy been able to influence the entire culture like a hurricane? The yogic science could not go ahead as briskly as allopathy has gone, although yoga has much to give mankind and the future will reveal it.

The yogic science is now in a process of being understood. During the centuries in which our forefathers lived, the science of yoga was mainly associated with asceticism, fakirs and renunciates. Most people thought that yoga had nothing to do with accomplishment and achievement, and so it was misunderstood. As we are educating ourselves and become enlightened, the sensitive representatives of this modern culture have come to the conclusion that the practitioner of yoga has less to renounce and more to achieve. If any of the great saints have been able to achieve something, they have achieved it only through yoga. The attainment of Buddha, Mahavira or others who followed was due to the awakening brought about by the practices of yoga. Therefore, yoga has less to do with renunciation and very much to do with achievement and accomplishment.

Why is self-discipline necessary?

Yoga is a science by which the individual becomes powerful enough to be able to put his ideas into practice. This is one of the important aspects, but we cannot neglect to mention its drawback. Yoga has never been a commercial science, although it has a bright future. If you study what is happening in the nations which are heavily and highly industrialized, you will find that there yoga has become the only resort to peace and social integration.

If yoga is neglected or rejected by the West just because it is Hindu and not Christian, then the whole structure of those nations is at the brink of disaster. The West has progressed because it has a well-organized society, but the individual is not organized. In order to discipline the mind at the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual levels, there ought to be a science. No politics, no military, no law can save a country unless the individual is disciplined. Individual discipline is a result of continued practice of yoga. Yoga gives great emphasis to individual discipline.

What is the ultimate aim of yoga?

From the therapeutic point of view, for the treatment of diseases, for mental well-being and rehabilitation, there cannot be anything like yoga. A lot of investigations are being conducted into yoga all over the world:

What is the influence of retention of breath on blood pressure and the heart?

What is the behaviour of the cardiac muscles and the lungs?

What is the rate of respiration?

What is the intake of oxygen?

What is the influence on the endocrine glands, and how do the brainwaves react?

These tests and many others are being conducted and are coming to positive conclusions.

As modern psychology puts it, man's present is based on his past. What is your past? What do you know about it? Have you analyzed your mind? If you want to, how can you? Everybody cannot go to a psychoanalyst, even in Europe, what to speak about India? Can one find 550 crore of psychoanalyst for 550 crore of people? No, it is not possible. One has to become one's own analyst. You must be able to withdraw yourself inwardly, to go into yourself. It is very important. Just as you are able to perceive objects outside: sounds, forms, taste, touch and smell, in the same way you should be able to see the train of thought, the conscious, subconscious and unconscious.

There are ranges of feeling, dimensions of emotion which one never knows unless one is able to go to the bottom of one's mind. Mind is not a thinking apparatus or a bundle of habits, as you thought when you were young. Mind is a homogeneous existence of awareness. This mind is like an ocean. You cannot say where the ocean is: the top is ocean, the bottom is ocean, the sides are ocean. You cannot point out a particular part as ocean. Likewise, you cannot say that thought is mind, or feeling is mind, or intellect is mind.

This homogeneous fount of awareness which is known as mind in modern psychology, as *chitta* in yoga and Samkhya philosophy, as *chaitanya* in Vedanta, is a secret, mysterious stuff. Man has not known it, but one who has known it, has known life. Why is man so miserable? I am unhappy, you are unhappy, most of us are unhappy – not because there are reasons for unhappiness, but because we don't know ourselves. We are suffering due to total ignorance of what we are. Therefore, the science of yoga, which leads to self-knowledge and self-realization, comes as a blessing and a boon for humankind for it ends the continuous cycle of ignorance and suffering. It leads us from darkness into light.



24

Scientific Investigations into the Practices of Yoga

Gomia, 25 July 1976

In recent years there has been a revival of the science of yoga all over the world, and now in India. In western countries people took up yoga as a science of creative intelligence and as a science for healing physical maladies. I think you have seen articles published in newspapers and journals on the efficiency of yogasanas.

In the beginning, people thought that asanas were like exercises learned in the physical training system. Later on scientific investigations in India as well as abroad proved that the practice of yogasanas has an influence on the nervous system, the endocrine glands, and their reaction on the emotional personality. Therefore, we had to change our concept about yogasanas.

We practise yogasanas, not to develop the physique as we do in physical training, but in order to harmonize the body, to purify and balance the nervous system, and to regulate the hormonal secretions, which have an immediate influence over our emotions such as anger, hatred, love, fear and anxiety.

Yogic research in coronary disease

Recently yoga practices have been found useful as a system of therapy. In Bihar, a research scheme is being conducted at Patna Medical College and I am the chief coordinator. The

subject of the research is the effect of asanas on coronary diseases, which means that even in heart diseases such as myocardial infarction or angina, asanas have a positive influence. Of course, yoga practices of a complicated nature should not be used in certain coronary diseases, yet the yogic practices will definitely bring about a positive transformation in the structure and functions of the coronary complex.

There is a heart specialist in Bombay, Dr Datey, who wrote an article on coronary diseases. He took about one hundred patients suffering from high blood pressure caused by hypertension and high cholesterol for a yogic experiment. The patients were of all age groups, young and old, male and female. A forty-day course was given. Ultimately a practice was evolved by which it was concluded that high blood pressure caused by hypertension can be brought down without the help of medicine, but rather by the psychic, nervous relaxation known as *shavasana* or *yoga nidra*.

Mental problems and addictions

Similar data can be given about yogic research on various diseases and they have a positive and hopeful message for everyone who is suffering from physical as well as mental problems. In Munger I have been working on this subject for the last twelve years. Whenever I go to Europe, I visit the mental hospitals in Denmark and Switzerland. There they teach the practices of hatha yoga: asana, pranayama and cleansing kriyas – cleaning the nose and taking out the hyperacidity, by which the young boys and girls become free from their mental problems.

Some years ago I met a group of people in Switzerland who were organizing an institution for alcoholics and chain smokers. In the beginning, they were not successful. They wanted to know who I was, because to them I looked like a gypsy. I told them, “I teach yoga, a science of the body, mind and soul.” Later on we discussed the subject and they implemented yoga with fantastic results. Addictions of the mind and senses, whatever they may be, can be removed with

the help of yoga. Yoga brings about a transformation of the total being, a change of temperament, of habits and outlook.

Unification of the personality

Meditation is something which everybody is interested in. For centuries and centuries, jnana yoga was praised by everyone in India as a way to self-realization, *atmanubhuti*. Today we have come to the conclusion that the process of concentration and meditation can influence the inner personality and open up a new dimension of consciousness. Meditation is a science of creative intelligence.

In the practice of meditation you are trying to look within. You see the objects outside with the external eyes, but when your eyes are closed, you look within and try to see what is happening inside of you. This is the art of meditation. It is a science, a system, a process of looking within. When the concentration becomes deep, bliss, strength and total unification with the spirit arises. Unless unification is established within yourself, the split personality which most people are suffering from cannot be negated. Everybody has a split personality, so everybody is schizophrenic. Unification between the two states of mind, the two states of personality must take place. That is called *yoga* or union.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Is yoga a direct method for moksha?

It is a difficult question, but I will try my best to answer it. I think perfect freedom, *moksha*, is not an outcome of yoga. I am a devotee of yoga. I am a teacher and a preacher, rather than a pioneer, but I think that yoga is a means by which we come to a certain point of consciousness from which we can go forward to moksha. Yoga is not a direct method of emancipation, *mukti* or *nirvana*, but by yoga we do develop. There is no way other than yoga by which we develop a particular dimension of consciousness, a kind of *drishti*, inner eye, by which we proceed further towards moksha.

Do the practices given for particular diseases have to be followed for life?

No, not at all. If you had been suffering from sciatica and after practising a full program of asanas you are alright, why should you continue? You are no longer a sciatica patient. In the case of obstinate diseases which go away and suddenly come back, we ask the person to continue the practices for about three years. Take asthma for example, first the asthmatic will do *vastra dhauti* every day of the week, then thrice a week, then twice a week, then once a week, then once a month. After about six months, we usually ask the patient to stop the cleansing practices on a regular basis and do them only when he feels an attack is coming. This applies to diabetes as well.

Do you first diagnose the disease and then proceed to the therapy?

First we have to diagnose exactly what one is suffering from, whether it is cardiac asthma or bronchia asthma; lumbago, slipped disc or sciatica; headache due to blood pressure, acidity or constipation. You have to take so many things into consideration. We have some knowledge about the treatment, about the asanas and cleansing kriyas, from ancient texts like *Gheranda Samhita*, *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* and *Goraksha Samhita*. In these books it is written which particular kriya is to be done for each set of diseases, so we just have to find out which disease the person is suffering from.

Do you give a course for certain diseases in particular months?

Yes, for example, we never take asthmatics in the monsoon season from June to September. Likewise, we never teach *shankhaprakshalana* on cloudy days. There are days when we do not teach *neti*, *dhauti*, *asana* and *pranayama* for particular diseases. Otherwise, for sciatica, rheumatism, normal cough and cold, we disregard the season or climate.

Are there any limitations in yoga therapy?

In acute diseases such as typhoid and pneumonia, yoga should not be practised. Yoga is more effective in chronic or constitutional diseases. That is the limitation. For chronic diseases like diabetes, asthma, arthritis, one can use it safely. There will be no problem. In diseases that pertain to man's behaviour, thinking, temperament, character, responsiveness and sensitivity, there is nothing better than yoga. If one is suffering from uncontrollable anger, inferiority complex and other complexes, there is nothing better than yoga. Yoga becomes a medium to correct oneself.

Many of the problems that are considered to be psychological, such as anger, are also physiological. Anger is intrinsically connected with the adrenal secretions, and the adrenal secretions are also connected with the excitation of the heart. When you become angry, there is excitation of the heart, therefore, the adrenal hormones must be balanced by the practice of shashankasana for fifteen minutes or half an hour at a time. If there is overstimulation or under stimulation of the adrenal glands, you may have a lot of anger, you may be ready to shoot anyone with a revolver, or perhaps you will become so passive that even if somebody slaps you on one cheek, you will turn the other.

Similarly, the overstimulation or under stimulation of the thyroid glands can make you hypersensitive emotionally or just kill your emotions. We recognize the psychological status of all these emotions such as love and hatred, but at the same time we know that they have a physiological base.

Before giving asanas and other practices, do you usually talk to the person and find out which particular practices are suitable?

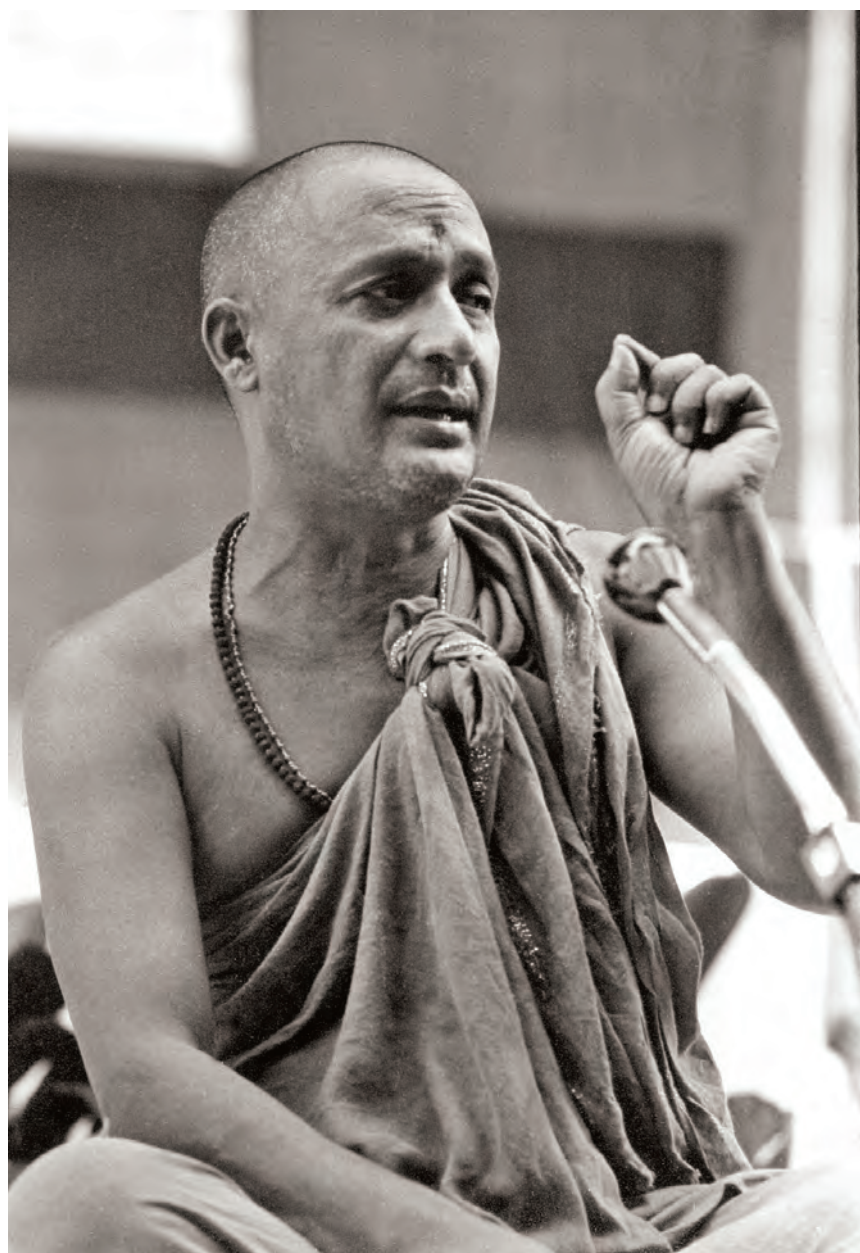
Yes, however, there are some asanas which are suitable for everyone from the age of twenty to eighty, whether one is paralyzed or healthy. They are known as pawanmuktasana, anti-rheumatic and anti-gastric series. For youngsters from the age of twelve to twenty-five there is a certain set of



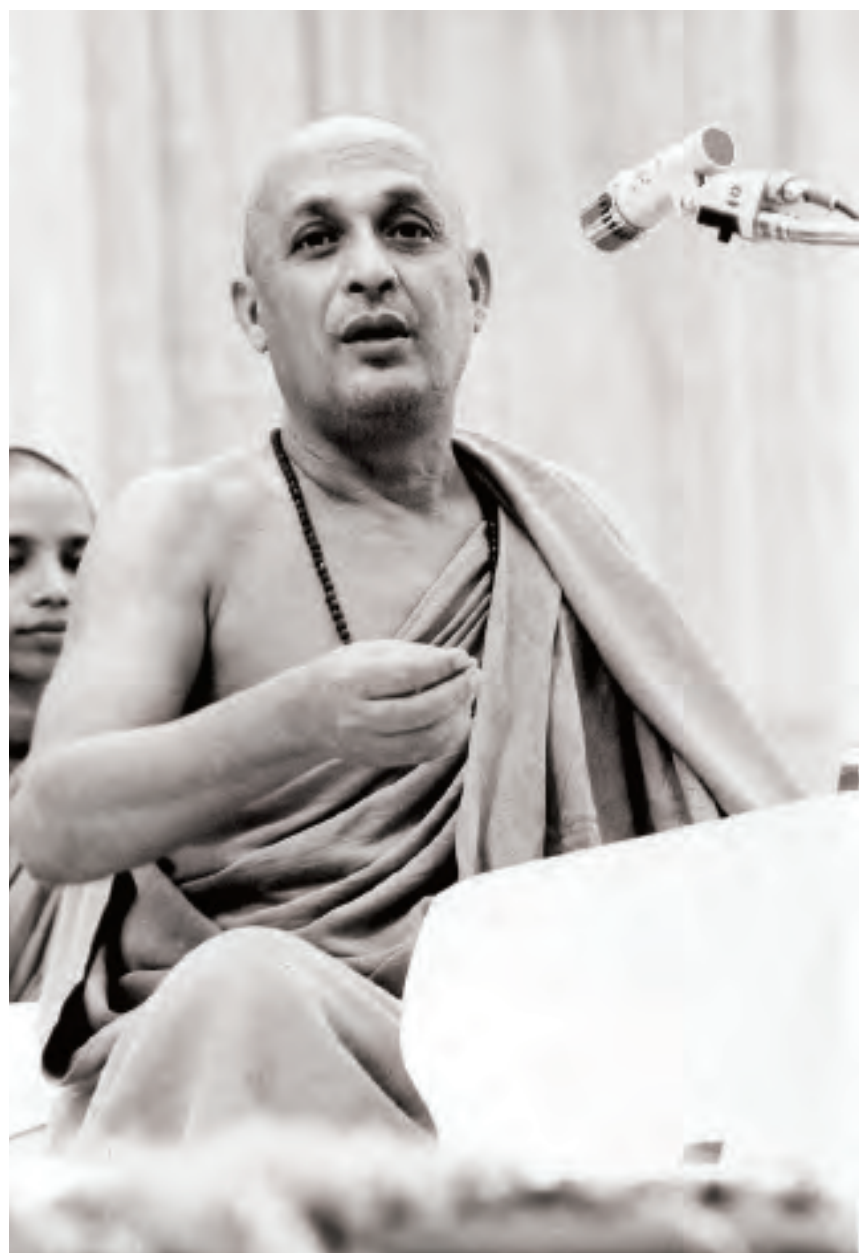


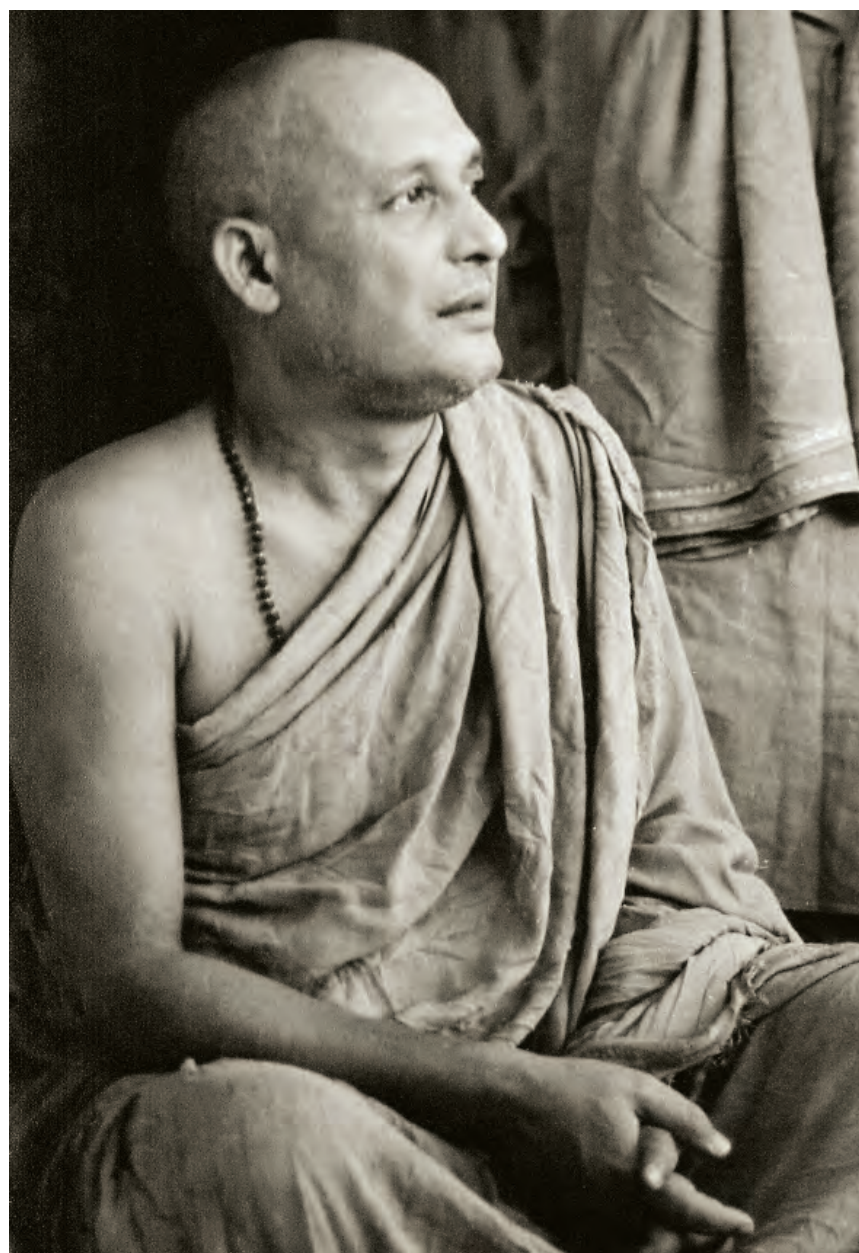












practices. For small children from eight to twelve, who are just approaching puberty, there is a different set. For those who are having certain problems like asthma or sciatica, there are some common exercises which will prepare the person for further practices. For one week we give everyone basic asanas and then we give each individual a special program for the specific problem.

In fact, we do not give a long list of asanas for therapy. We give pawanmuktasana in order to warm up the body and make it somewhat flexible, and three asanas for the particular problem. If you are suffering from sciatica, we teach makarasana, bhujangasana and shalabhasana. If you are having sinusitis, we just teach one pranayama and neti kriya, not twenty or thirty asanas.



25

Yoga and Meditation

Northern Production Film Co., Madras, 12 August 1976

There are many aspects of yoga, including hatha yoga, raja yoga, jnana yoga, karma yoga, bhakti yoga, as well as different aspects of spiritual life involving hundreds of practices: meditation, japa, mantra, yoga nidra, asana, pranayama, mudra, bandha, kriya yoga and many more.

In modern society, people want to know much more about hatha yoga, especially the managers and executives of big industry, who are beginning to use the depth of yoga in their day-to-day administration and production. They know that yoga can increase the capacity and efficiency of their work.

Yoga has become recognized all over the world as a science by which one can become more capable and increase the powers of concentration and resistance. It is becoming increasingly more popular with sannyasin and householder teachers all over the world.

Imported diseases

There are many mental and physical diseases, especially in our modern communities, which are imported diseases. They have come with industrialization. A few hundred years ago, your great grandfathers were working either in a small, simple shop selling flour, rice and grains or ploughing the

fields, but now your children are going to work in factories and they have to deal with the government, the taxation department, banks, consumers and the highly competitive business world.

The whole night they are tense, whether awake or dreaming. They cannot sleep because their mind is so active with the many problems they are facing everyday. This did not happen before. The speed of the mind is greater than it was two or three generations ago, so your diseases will also be different from those of your grandfathers. These new diseases that are arising are due to the restless and anxious mind, which cannot be tackled by medicine or drugs.

Even if you adopt a new social system, which would take many years to implement, still the diseases would continue. The only way to deal with them now is through the practices of yoga. This is the reason why the West has taken to yoga so quickly, not because it is something new. After all, they have their own religion and culture, but they realized that yoga was the answer to their ever increasing problems of mental and physical health, the same problems which are growing in India day by day.

For those people who are suffering mentally, emotionally and physically, and who are beyond the range of medical treatment, yoga definitely has something to offer. In yoga there are physical as well as mental practices by which you can control the malfunctioning of the body and mind. At the same time, those who are dedicated to spiritual life can gain deep and powerful insights into their inner nature.

The purpose of life

One of the most important questions today is, 'What is the purpose of life, what is the meaning of human life and existence?' For those who have faith in God and in the eternity of the soul, this is certainly an important question. Even for those who have no faith in God, no faith in religious denominations, no faith in the eternity of the soul, still this question comes up time after time.

There may be millions of souls in this world who have not thought seriously about the purpose of life. However, there definitely comes one tiny question to all those who have an intellect and can think about it, 'Why do I exist and where am I going?' The moment you become serious about your search, about the purpose of life, you have so many alternatives before your mind and you have to choose one of them.

There are people who believe that the purpose of life is to live in God, and there are those who believe that the purpose of life is to realize the highest spirit in man. There are those who believe that the purpose of life is to merge this finite mind and the cosmic mind and become one with the cosmic Self. There are those who believe that to stop all desires, all mental functions, and enter into samadhi or nirvana is the purpose or goal of life.

There are those who believe that the purpose of life is to help your brethren, your fellow beings, who are less privileged than you are. Then there are those who think that the only purpose in life is to live as God wishes. According to the type of person you are, you have to find one purpose or goal for yourself. There are so many human ideals. It is like so many items in a shop and you have to choose one that suits your own inner nature.

We all have limitations, mentally, intellectually and emotionally, and we have to choose a purpose, keeping our limitations well in mind. If you go to a store and you like something very much, still you have your financial limitations. You may definitely want to buy that item, but you cannot afford it. In this context, yoga comes to your help. The purpose which you are now discovering for yourself is born from a limited mind. However, when this mind becomes free from limitations, its scope is greater and its decisions are more accurate and perfect.

We are not able to see an object at a distance with the naked eyes, because our eyes have a limited scope of vision, but with the help of an additional telescope, we can see

the object at the greatest distance. With the help of yoga, we have to enlarge our vision. We have to be sure that the purpose which we have chosen for ourselves, which we have realized to be the purpose of our life, is not born of the limited mind, but is an offshoot of the infinite mind. For this, yoga offers the practice of meditation.

Dhyana yoga

Meditation is known as *dhyana yoga* which literally means 'a practice in which the awareness is made constant, unbroken and unflinching'. When you visualize an object within yourself, the awareness of that object is not total. It is intercepted; it is not complete. To give you an example, if you pick a flower for your concentration, you are aware of the flower; you are aware of the process of meditation, you are aware of the mediator. You are also aware of other thoughts which are interceding.

Although thoughts are a part of the mind, ultimately they have to be resolved. The mind in meditation has to be consumed in its totality by awareness of the object on which you are practising dhyana. This is one important thing about meditation. Once the mind becomes constant, unbroken and unflinching, enlightenment takes place from inside.

Meditation or dhyana yoga is to be accomplished in three stages. If you start practising meditation directly on an object, you will have to do a lot of fighting with the mind and as a result, you may have a lot of tension and difficulty. First of all, you must tranquillize your senses. You have to block the sensory channels. You have to block the passage by which the impressions are coming from outside into the mind. That is the preliminary and the most important part of meditation. In raja yoga it is known as *pratyahara*, which literally means 'withdrawal of the sensory activities'.

In this particular context, there are some exercises by which you can withdraw yourself completely, for instance, nada yoga, antar mouna, ajapa japa. These practices have to be continued for a considerable length of time. In yoga there

is no fighting with the mental impressions, but one deals gradually with the incoming impressions systematically and not in a harsh way.

At a particular point in this practice, there comes the state of introversion. This means that you become more aware of the inside and less aware of the outside, the external experiences, until for a moment you do not have empirical experiences. You have inner experiences. These experiences are not the indication of your spiritual enlightenment, but they prove that your mind is becoming introverted. They are the psychic experiences, seeing objects, colours, the light, the feeling of something moving in the spinal cord, and so on.

When these non-empirical experiences start from within, it is proof that now you are ready for the next step in meditation which is to hold your mind on one object or point. It may be a gross object, a sound, a star, a mantra, the form of a saint, an idea or a feeling. This object should be chosen keeping in mind the possibility and the practicality. The object will help your consciousness to crystallize itself. When the object becomes clear and vivid in your imagination, the final stage of meditation comes by itself.

Awareness of the breath

There are so many practices. It is difficult to enumerate them all here, but I have one important practice which is awareness of one's own natural breath. We must be natural without tension. We are breathing now, everyone is breathing, but we are not aware of it. Therefore, we have to join and unify the awareness with the breath.

Sit in any comfortable and steady posture such as the lotus pose, siddhasana or vajrasana, with the spinal cord straight. The eyes may be open, half open, or completely closed. Just become aware of the breath in the nostrils. If your mind troubles you, leave the practice, because meditation cannot be accomplished in one day or in one month or in one year. Meditation is a very important practice, and even if it takes a few years to develop, it is alright.

When you become aware of your natural breath, you must try to discover the sound. You must discover the nature of the sound which the breath is producing. If you are able to become aware of your natural breath for some time with success, if you try to listen to the sound of the breath, sometimes you will feel that it is *Om*, sometimes *Soham*. Sometimes you may feel that it is the sound of the waves of the sea rolling up and down. However, you will have to discover this for yourself.

By practising awareness of the breath incessantly, the mind changes and is transformed into a subtle matter. You begin to have visions or what we call the conscious dream. While you are practising awareness of the breath, you see so many images on the mental television screen that you even forget that you have been concentrating on the breath. Every time the mind slips into visionary experiences, you have to bring it back to the awareness of the breath.

When these psychic visions, these inner images become clear, at that moment you must choose a symbol and visualize that symbol, because the mind has become capable of visualizing a symbol inwardly. You try to follow this symbol without a break. This will lead you to deep meditation where there is no awareness of the meditator or the process of meditation. There is only inner awareness. It is the beginning of the process of enlightenment. This is one method.

Mantra

The other method is the practice of mantra. *Mantra* is a powerful sound which influences the deepest unconscious in man. Mantra is a sound which has speed, velocity, frequency and colour. When this sound is repeated mentally, it gains momentum. It goes deep into the subconscious mind and there it completely changes or transforms the structure of consciousness.

Mantra can be repeated with the breath, the mala, the heartbeat, or by concentrating on any of the psychic centres like manipura, anahata or ajna.

Let me tell you something about the use of mantra from my personal life. I was born in a devoted, religious, Hindu family. I studied philosophy, psychology and science, and after some time I began to feel that there was no God, no continuity of spirit. I thought that religion was bogus, a hoax. However, since I was born into a religious Hindu family, from the age of eight years I was taught how to practise mantra on the mala, and I had to do it everyday.

When I grew up, I said to my father, "I do not believe in God, so why should I practise mantra?" he replied, "You are practising mantra and not the name of God." He convinced me to practise my mantra regularly, and as happens with most youths, the times changed. I had to reform my philosophy. I had many different experiences in life which changed my atheism. But I never left the practice of mantra, and gradually I began to realize the long term effects of this practice on the mind and consciousness. Therefore, if you want to grow inwardly, the practice of mantra is very important and it should be performed for ten to fifteen minutes daily.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Can you give us a mantra?

Yes. The mantra should be taken only when one has become serious about the intention of leading the spiritual life inwardly. A mantra should be given considering the structure of the individual.

How should the mantra be done?

When you begin the practice of meditation, the mantra should be chanted orally so that it can influence your brainwave patters. If you chant the mantra *Om, Om, Om*, the sound waves are registered by the brain and the alpha waves are intensified. When the alpha waves are increased, tranquillity comes. Chanting the mantra aloud is important from the point of view that it automatically tranquilizes

the patterns of the brain. This will help you later on in concentration.

Will two different people using different meditation practices arrive at different conclusions?

Two different people meditating in two different ways will not arrive at different conclusions. They will arrive at one conclusion. The ultimate conclusion is one.

I have studied many Chinese books and was struck by the fact that they hardly mention God. Could you give me your idea about this?

In fact, the concept of God is always different in different periods of history. The Hindus in the vedic period and even now believe that God is someone, somewhere. In Christianity and Islam it is believed that God is someone, somewhere.

The Upanishads in India were discussions between guru and disciple about the ultimate nature of the individual and the universe. The Upanishads were less concerned with that God who is someone and somewhere, they were more concerned with the ultimate nature of reality. Then they became aware of the individual self. They came to the conclusion that everything is within. Within is the microcosm, the miniature of the macrocosm, and that the God who is someone and somewhere is also inside.

These discussions about the nature of reality and the nature of God continued for centuries in India and finally it was decided that the Self was perfect. With the help of meditation, or dhyana yoga, one could become aware of that microcosmic consciousness. However, this discussion about the nature of reality became so metaphysical, so abstract, so abstruse, that by the time Lord Buddha came he just kept quiet about all these topics. He did not speak about them at all. Later on when his disciples, the Buddhists, went to China, Japan, and other South East Asian countries, they also said nothing. Buddhist monks travelled extensively throughout the world, but the Buddhist philosophy had the greatest influence

in China and Japan. Therefore, in their system, although individually they do accept God as a reality, the philosophy teaches that everything is part of the way, that is all.

I do not like to go into abstract and metaphysical details about God and reality because that sometimes makes people atheists. When you think about God, He is the goal, but when you go in search of Him, He becomes the way. You keep on going and going, and He is the way. Now He is unknown because we are not searching for Him. And if He is the goal then He is not infinite, because the very word goal presupposes an end, and He should be endless. One who is endless and infinite can never be a goal, He can only be the way.

Those who are devotees and religious people should not worry about what I have said. You can worship God in any way you like. I am not going to change it. If you worship Christ it is okay, if you worship Rama it is okay, if you worship Mohammed it is okay.

Talking about God will lead you nowhere, because we are all blinded by *avidya*, ignorance, psychosis and neurosis. Our vision is too narrow. We are like the seven blind people trying to describe an elephant. One says it is like a rope, another like a pillar, a third says it is like this and a fourth says it is like that. God is not a matter of discussion. God is a matter of love, dedication and surrender. Those who have not seen God can find Him in their guru. Guru is the replica of God. By faith, devotion, sincerity, virtue and complete surrender, you are nearer to God. Even if you do not see Him it does not matter. We should not try to dissect Him on the table of logic.

In Chinese philosophy there are four main influences: Buddhism, Zen, Taoism and Tantra. What struck me was that they are all mixed together. One day a Chinese will be Buddhist and another day he will be Taoist, and he is quite conscious of this.

It is an interaction of various faiths, various philosophies which were separated academically, but practically they were

not. Similarly, Hindus in India will worship Lord Vishnu, Shiva and Devi. They don't know to which they belong.

There seems to be a difference in the way of Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists. Each is a different path?

Yes, philosophically there is a difference. If you ask me to pay my respects to Rama or Krishna or Shiva, I can do so, because I see divinity. If you ask me to go to a church, a mosque or a temple, I will do it gladly because I feel the divinity, the sanctity there.

It seems that the more you meditate, the closer you come to reality, and the more you read the farther you go from it. According to our philosophy, people who meditate are in the immediate vicinity of the reality. They are closer to reality because they are tackling it through the right channel, meditation. Those who study and are very learned are trying to understand the reality from an intellectual basis and somehow or other there is a barrier.

It seems the more you study and think, the more you obstruct the higher vision. Yes, when you study a lot you add layer after layer to your consciousness. When you meditate you remove the different layers and ultimately you come to your real nature, the *shoonyata*. Study, reasoning, intellectual reflection on God or on any point of spiritual life, is helpful in the beginning. However, when you are ready for a practical approach, practical application, then if you continue this intellectual endeavour, it becomes a barrier. Once you know that your spiritual life is beginning and you are establishing it, the intellectual life has to be cut short. An ounce of practice is better than tons of theory.

26

The Art of Relaxation with Total Awareness

Bombay, 8 November 1976

Most people think that if they have sound sleep at night they are relaxed, but, in fact, this is not relaxation. In yoga there is a branch in which the art and science of relaxation are practised. It is known as yoga nidra. In the practice of yoga nidra there is a special emphasis on the maintenance of unification of awareness during the state of relaxation. This means that the consciousness which is normally extrovert should become unified and totally aware inwardly during the process of relaxation.

Therefore, *yoga nidra* literally means relaxation by following a process of unification of the mind. During this practice, which is also known as psychic sleep, the subconscious mind is brought to the surface and you are able to perceive a series of experiences, of *samskara* or impressions, which have been buried in your subconscious mind for many years, from your childhood up to this day.

Most of the diseases and also the errors in your behaviour, which you attribute to your present circumstances, have an intimate connection with your past, with your early childhood. This means that diseases pertaining to the body and also the problems pertaining to your mind, your difficulty in adjusting with your circumstances and environment, are not necessarily due to the present

circumstances. They may be deeply rooted in some of the impressions or experiences of your childhood.

Therefore, it is necessary for everyone to follow the whole series of their experiences right from childhood. However, these impressions and experiences which we call *samskara* or *karma* are so strongly embedded in the subconscious that unless total relaxation of the mind takes place they do not come up. You can never see them, never feel them, never know them. It is only when complete relaxation has taken place, when the mind is withdrawn, the senses are withdrawn, the present experiences are withdrawn, that the subconscious mind emerges and comes up on the surface level.

Even as the subconscious impressions come up symbolically in the dream state, in the same way, when the mind is totally relaxed, you are aware that you can follow most of the experiences right from childhood. In *yoga nidra*, the emphasis is on relaxation together with unified awareness or total awareness.

The individual consciousness becomes so sensitive, so receptive during the practice of *yoga nidra* that if you try to influence yourself you can do so. Through this you can understand the importance of the deeper layers of your consciousness. There are much deeper, higher and more potent states of individual awareness than those we are aware of at this moment.

Every state of consciousness has its own limitations of experience. This particular state of consciousness in which we are now is more limited than the subconscious state which we usually experience in *yoga nidra*. In this psychic sleep there is a greater possibility to induce a new system of thinking, a new process of adjustment and an absolutely new process of tranquillity.

There are various systems of *yoga nidra*: for children, for grown-ups, for the elderly, and for people who want to improve their spiritual experience. For those who want to transcend the normal awareness and experience the higher or deeper state of awareness, the system of *yoga nidra* is

slightly different than the practice which we do for ourselves: for changing our habits, improving our mental state or treating maladies of our children at home.

A lot of experiments have been done on yoga nidra. I am not going to cite all of them, but I would like to mention a few on children who cannot speak well, who stutter, who do not sleep well, or who snore. During yoga nidra their subconscious mind can be influenced or they themselves can influence their own mind during this particular state of yoga nidra. Within a period of time, a week or ten days, you will find that suddenly they are getting rid of that habit or that bad influence.

It has also been shown through experiments that if you want to study a language or certain subjects with the help of a tape recorder when your mind is completely relaxed by the practice of yoga nidra, you can do so. You can do both jobs at the same time, relaxing and simultaneously participating in the process of knowledge.

I will tell you about one particular experience. One of my friends or disciples was having a psychosis or a kind of misunderstanding in his mind about his health. He was always thinking that he had some malady which actually he did not have. I tried to convince him and he did accept it intellectually, but this did not help him much because I could not convince him emotionally. I could not convince his subconscious mind. Then I put him through a course of yoga nidra. During the practice I spoke to him about the same things that I used to speak about at other times, but his acceptance was much more complete. After this I noticed a great improvement not only in his health but also in his attitude towards himself.

The most important thing in yoga nidra is to maintain your awareness throughout and not to sleep. If you sleep, if you lose your consciousness, it is *nidra*, sleep, and not yoga nidra. Therefore, in yoga nidra the mind is not allowed to concentrate or unite at one particular point, but it is made to move from point to point, to a number of points, for about half an hour or twenty-five minutes.

It is always better to practise yoga nidra either with someone or with the help of a tape recorder. If you practise yoga nidra by yourself, there is a problem. You will retain your memory, your intellectual awareness, throughout the practice and that should not be there. The instructions should be the same, but it is better if they are recorded. You may speak them to someone and someone may speak them to you day after day, but the same system should be repeated. The emphasis, the sentences, the arrangement, everything should be the same point by point; nothing should differ.

Those who want to influence themselves, who want to impress their personality, must have some kind of resolve, some kind of auto-suggestion, at the beginning of yoga nidra. However, those who want to develop concentration and evolve spiritually from the lower self to the higher self, must have special practices during the yoga nidra.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

What is the difference between yoga nidra and the method of psychoanalysis?

In yoga nidra there is virtually no knowledge of the experiences, whereas in psychoanalysis you go through a totally different process in which you are aware of each and everything that is happening, but at the same time the problems and complexes are brought to the surface and examined. During yoga nidra the problems and complexes that are inherent in the mind get dissolved of their own accord in deep states of relaxation. Whereas in psychoanalysis it is a lengthy process and finally nothing is resolved.

Is the purpose the same?

The purpose is the same but yoga nidra is easy. Practically everyone can do it after a little bit of training. It is not a technical and complicated process.

Are there certain elements forbidden in the methods of psychoanalysis and yoga nidra?

Definitely, in psychoanalysis and in yoga nidra there may be certain points which are contradictory to the constitution or the temperament of the practitioner, so they have to be taken out.

Can you tell us the method of yoga nidra for children?

When you are teaching children for any purpose, you must give them simple yoga nidra. In about three minutes you get them in a relaxed state and then you can start giving them suggestions in a simple, well-formulated language. When a child goes to bed, in about three minutes he is asleep. At that time you should wake him up and give him all the suggestions you like, but they should be simple and systematic.

It is said that the one who knows others is learned but the one who knows himself is far more learned. Can you comment on this?

Yes, this is one hundred percent correct and we will go further and say, "One who knows others is learned, he who knows himself is more learned and he who knows his real self, the spiritual nature, has total knowledge." The practice of yoga nidra can help you to achieve this.

People think there is no worse misfortune than not having enough, but they will never have enough.

It is the inclination of man that he is never satisfied with what he has. Nothing is enough for him, but there comes a point in life when he has evolved himself spiritually and then everything is enough.

The saint knows everything without looking out of the window. The saint does not travel for he knows all things without seeing them.

Yes, it is true, because the spiritual nature is not something which is far away from us. It is the nucleus of our existence,

the seed, the centre, and we are the circumference. It is within; it is our totality. Our absolute personality is that. Therefore, we do not have to go through the windows or through the door. We just close our eyes and we can see everything inside.

Is the state of yoga nidra more or less a direct dream?

Dreams are spontaneous and we have no control over them. Sometimes we are aware of the dreams, but most of the time we are not, whereas in yoga nidra the whole process of the subconscious mind is completely under control. Therefore, it is guided and can help us. Of course, dreams can also help us, but since they are not guided, they are spontaneous and do not help us as much as yoga nidra does.

Many people have significant dreams. The dreams are relevant as their mind is functioning in an order or system. However, there are many people who have very confused minds, dissipated minds, and when they dream, the dreams are like broken pieces scattered here and there, so nothing tangible comes from them. Therefore, it is important that we do not depend only on dreams, as they may not be tangible. The practice of yoga nidra is intended to channel the subconscious mind towards the desired end. If you want to realize your spiritual nature, you cannot depend on dreams. You have to depend on yoga nidra, because it is a systematic practice for developing the mind.

What is the difference between yoga nidra and transcendental meditation?

Transcendental meditation is a combination of mantra and antar mouna, which means you go on practising a particular mantra and become aware of all that is happening in your mind. That is transcendental meditation, whereas in yoga nidra you do not use the mantra at all, but you are using your own mind without bringing anything from outside to influence you.

In yoga nidra you have created a system for yourself, a particular series of practices ranging from fifteen minutes to

half an hour. During that period you lead your mind as you lead your baby or anybody else from one point to another point, and the next point and the next point. This is how you are training the mind.

In yoga nidra you are actually training the mind consciously. You are holding the mind from step to step, from point to point. You are not allowing your mind to run riot, whereas in antar mouna you are only practising observation of thoughts and if your mind is dissipated, you go on watching it. This is the fundamental difference.

How does yoga nidra help to remove sickness?

From what I have learned from other people and also from my own experience, yoga nidra can be applied to the physical maladies and to the mental problems. Eighty to ninety percent of all physical problems are born of the mind, therefore, yoga nidra is effective for resolving them.

If the mind has a particular problem in ordinary life, what can we do to solve that with only one hour of yoga nidra?

It can be done, but it depends on the type of problem and the time which you want to spend. If you want to transcend a particular state of mind in a certain time, another technique may be more useful. Take, for example, anxiety neurosis, nervous depression or nervous breakdown. These are mental problems in which yoga nidra may not be so helpful. Other methods may be required.

How old is yoga nidra?

The practice of yoga nidra is very old. You can still find references to it in the tantric texts. However, in this century, it was I who revised this ancient teaching and brought it into practice. In the tantric system there are many practices and out of them yoga nidra is intended for using the mind to transcend the mind. Somehow I discovered yoga nidra for myself. When I discovered that it was beneficial for my own personality, I saw that it would also be useful for spiritually-

minded people, especially in the beginning. Of course, I had no mental or physical problems as such, but everybody has spiritual problems. Therefore, I discovered yoga nidra for myself, for solving my spiritual problems.

What is the form of yoga nidra practised by yogis?

The form of yoga nidra practised by yogis is different to that practised today. Many people practised with mantra. That is the easiest path. You do not have many problems with mantra yoga. You go on doing your japa, *Om, Om, Om*, mentally. The evolved yogis practised yoga nidra lying down and they transcended their body consciousness. In the middle stage they practised in *padmasana*, the lotus pose. They would sit down with their back straight and try to control their minds and become aware of the inner powers like kundalini and the chakras. Those who were more evolved would lie down and transcend the body, but most people practised with the help of mantra. That was supposed to have been the most common and easiest path.



27

Satsang: Ajapa Japa and Kriya Yoga

Bombay, 10 November 1976

Please explain the practice of ajapa japa.

In the practice of ajapa japa you do not have to do anything except watch your natural breathing process. Awareness of one's breath brings one closer to the mind. When you have been able to establish the awareness of the breath, you can also attach a mantra to that. If you go on practising ajapa japa, you will find that meditation dawns by itself.

In ajapa japa there are several important factors which you have to remember. First is the awareness of the breath and second is the discovery of the psychic passage. This psychic passage is located in your spinal column. It is important because it is the pathway of kundalini. You have to withdraw your mind and senses, and the breath has to ascend and descend the psychic passage.

Within the psychic passage from bottom to top are the *shatchakra* or six psychic centres: mooladhara, swadhisthana, manipura, anahata, vishuddhi and ajna. These six chakras must be awakened. Some people have already awakened them. There are many methods by which these chakras can be awakened and one of the best is ajapa japa.

During the first stage you have to get a grip over the breath, for half an hour or so. Then, in the second stage, you should feel that you are breathing through the spinal

column. There is a special pranayama which is used, called ujjayi pranayama, which is like the gentle snoring of a sleeping baby. As you do it quietly, you begin to feel as if the breathing process is taking place in the spinal column and not in the nose, which means that your concentration in the spinal column is becoming more and more intensified.

Once the awakening takes place in the chakras, meditation dawns. You do not have to learn from me how to meditate. The inward consciousness becomes effulgent. You suddenly become conscious inwardly because the awakening of the chakras concerns your evolution in this life. Up to mooladhara is the evolution of instinct. Beyond mooladhara is the evolution of intellect and beyond ajna is the evolution of intuition.

These are the three grades of evolution: animals on the instinctive plane, human beings on the intellectual plane, and higher experience on the intuitive plane. Human evolution begins from mooladhara and this level pertains to the expression of spiritual consciousness. Almost all methods will help you in the awakening of kundalini, whether you practise pranayama, nama japa, sankirtan or your own religious worship, *upasana*. Ultimately, it is the shakti which is awakened.

When you are able to influence the psychic chakras, through the practice of ajapa japa, awakening takes place and dhyana yoga dawns. It is the same as when you take some kind of drug and you are under its influence. After the practice of ajapa japa, you should take to the practice of kriya yoga. It is not a difficult practice. Ajapa japa culminates in kriya yoga – a compact system of dhyana by which an individual can express his light and his shakti completely.

Which of the mantras can be practised safely without getting initiation from the guru?

One can practise every mantra, there is no risk. Mantra is a science derived from tantra. Mantra is not a science derived from bhakti yoga. Mantra, yantra, mandala, and

so on, are part and parcel of the tantric system. It is said that the tantric system is for those who are unable to follow rules and discipline.

Some of the mantras are *sakama*, wish-fulfilling, and some are *nishkama*, spiritual, like *Om*. So far as the *nishkama* mantras are concerned, you can go ahead without any doubt whatsoever. In *sakama* mantra, the mantra of *shakti*, the mother power, is always protective and preponderant. Therefore, you can practise this mantra without proper initiation, there is no harm, but here the purpose or aim of the mantra should be repeated for a period of time, ten or fifteen minutes.

If you repeat a mantra for inducing *dhyana*, you may have trouble, because you will face certain experiences. If you are a worshipper of Hanuman and you start meditation on Hanumanji's murti, you may have a little bit of a problem. Some fantastic psychic dreams might come to you. You may have nice dreams or all types or frightening dreams, or you may have psychic dreams from your previous life. If you are practising the mantra of Hanumanji and suddenly you think about something else and that 'something' happens, and again something else and it happens, you will begin to wonder what is going on here.

This kind of yogic *sadhana* should not be done, but purely from the tantric point of view, repeat this mantra one hundred and fifty or two hundred times for a period of forty days. If you do it that way, there is no risk.

What mantra do you use for ajapa japa?

Any short mantra will do for *ajapa japa*, but the best is *Soham*. Some people practise *ajapa japa* with *Om*, others with *Rama*. Any mantra which can be fitted into the span of the breath can be used for *ajapa japa*. You can use *Om Namah Shivaya* or any other mantra, but according to tradition, the *ajapa* mantra is *Soham* and its reverse, *Hamso*.

Can you enlighten us about the kriyas of hatha yoga and kriya yoga?

There are six kriyas in hatha yoga, these are known as *shatkriyas*. Hatha yoga is a science in which balance and harmony is brought about between the two nadis, ida and pingala. the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems. To be more clear, the balance between the mental force and the vital force. These forces should be equalized, regularized and harmonized. That is the purpose of hatha yoga.

Hatha is composed of two syllables: *ha* which means the vital energy, and *tha* which means the mental energy. In the body we have two shaktis, *prana shakti*, the vital energy, by which we live and move, and *manas shakti*, the mental energy, by which we think. If one of these shaktis is out of proportion, you may beat somebody, murder somebody or burgle somebody's house, as your mental shakti is not able to control the prana shakti. If you have less prana shakti, less vitality, and more mental shakti, you are going to think and think and think and accomplish nothing. Automatically there will be frustration. There must be a balance between *prana* or vitality and *manas* or mind.

Ida corresponds to one nervous system and pingala to another. *Ida* controls all the mental functions. If there is something wrong in the ida system, your mind will be collapsing. *Pingala* is the system which controls all the vital flows: prana, apana, samana, udana, vyana; also digestion, assimilation, excretion, and the physical functions.

There should be harmony between, ida and pingala. For this purpose, the yogic texts like *Goraksha Samhita*, *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, and the tantra shastras also, have suggested the six hatha yoga kriyas. Those are traditionally known as: neti, dhauti, basti, trataka, nauli and kapalbhati. Out of these, *neti* is useful before you practise pranayama. It is good for people suffering from sinusitis and migraine, but I am talking from the spiritual point of view. When you practise pranayama, you must practise neti first. It is necessary for people having

fits, like epilepsy, hysteria, migraine and adenoids. In the practice one is pouring warm saline water from one nostril to the other.

Dhauti is cleaning the alimentary canal, stomach and large and small intestines. Different methods are used like *kunjal*, drinking water and vomiting it out for hyperacidity: *shankaparakshalana*, drinking water and expelling it from the anus, and *vastra dhauti*, swallowing a piece of cloth and taking out the mucus from the stomach.

These practices are necessary for those people who want to have good concentration while sitting in an asana for two or three hours, because the body must be pure. If there is a lot of acidity in the system and you sit for meditation, you are going to have only those experiences which are produced by hyperacidity. Your experiences will not be spiritual, but they will be hyperacidity experiences. Likewise *trataka*, concentration on a bindu or a light, and *basti*, a type of yogic enema, are known as hatha yoga kriyas which purify.

When we talk about kriya, we always say shatkriya of hatha yoga and kriya of kriya yoga. *Kriya yoga* is a system which has come from the tantric texts. It is a combination of asana, pranayama, mudra, bandha and concentration. Hatha yoga, mantra yoga and all other forms of yoga are preparations for the practice of kriya yoga. Through the practice of kriya yoga one can accelerate the process of one's own spiritual evolution.

Who is qualified to practise kriya yoga?

Everyone can practise kriya yoga. There is no problem and no risk, but it is necessary that before you start practising kriya yoga, you must have practised the other forms of yoga, like khechari mudra, for a long time. If I start teaching khechari to a new person just now, he is just going to fold his tongue back and no more. However, if he has been practising khechari, vajroli and shambhavi mudras, uddiyana bandha and many other practices for the past two or three years, then if he practises kriya yoga, he will succeed without fear

of any risk. I am of the opinion that everyone is fit for kriya yoga. This is perhaps the only powerful yogic system which everybody can practise.

Which diet is most conducive to spiritual life and healing?

There are many diseases where one should only take vegetables and not non-vegetarian diet. We have to accept that if someone is suffering from diabetes, we must ask him not to take rice, potatoes or sugar, the most delicious things of life. We have to discard them, we have to restrict ourselves. Does this mean that rice, potato and sugar are anti-spiritual? No, for the time being these things are unsuitable. Likewise, at a particular stage of yoga we may have to give up, not only non-vegetarian dishes, but some of the vegetarian dishes also.

There is another important point regarding diet for sadhakas. When you are meditating and you are succeeding in the practice, there is a general tendency which has been seen. The inner body temperature falls. Naturally when this happens the physical functions will slow down. The digestive juices, insulin and other secretions will not be as plentiful as required. At this low body temperature, you are definitely not going to digest or assimilate anything unless you take a light vegetarian diet. In order to digest certain diets, like non-vegetarian diet, you will need more body heat than you normally have. A tiger is totally non-vegetarian and has a high body temperature; therefore his life span is short.

A person with a high body temperature has a short life span. It has been seen by scientists investigating the rabbit, the rat and many other animals. When the temperature of these animals was lowered, their life span was increased. If you want to lead a longer life, naturally you will have to bring down the temperature of the body, so that you will be able to live for ten, twenty or thirty years more.

When the body temperature is lowered and you take non-vegetarian diet, or any heavy diet, even puri or halva, you will not be able to digest it. It will create toxins in your

system. When toxins are created, disease is created. Instead of living a longer life, one may die earlier.

In this sense, the people in India are never against a non-vegetarian diet, but at a certain stage of yogic discipline it is advisable to do away with all those foods that strain your digestive system. Amongst these a non-vegetarian diet is included.

What are the best yoga practices for adolescents?

For young people surya namaskara and nadi shodhana pranayama are compulsory. Also the worship of a deity like Hanuman is powerful and ideal for a young person. You will have no weaknesses, no heat, no cold, no infirmity of will or of body. I like Hanumanji with a tail.

How can you help mentally handicapped children who are hyperactive?

There are two ways. There may be more, but these two ways have been tried. One is yoga nidra and the other is the hatha yoga practices of neti and dhauti.

In yoga nidra you take the child just a few minutes after he has gone to sleep. You have to find out exactly when he is sleeping. Usually it takes three to five minutes for a child up to ten to enter into the subconscious state. When he is asleep but not completely in slumber, wake him up and tell him that he must practise a particular kriya, like neti or dhauti, and then let him sleep again.

Do this for fifteen days and on the sixteenth day practise neti yourself and let the child observe you. On the seventeenth day he will also do it. What I mean is, before you teach him the actual practices of yoga, you should take help from the science of hypnotism by which you should be able to communicate with his subconscious layers, as his conscious layer is not responding.

This is an incomplete explanation of yoga nidra, but as far as my experience goes, with the help of yoga nidra, you can make anyone do anything. At the moment, I have no

time; I have so much work to do. However, there was a time when I used to teach yoga nidra and I helped many people. I have taught languages to myself and to others in deep sleep with the help of a tape-recording.

The first point to remember is that this conscious state in which you are living is not a dynamic state. The subconscious is more dynamic and still more dynamic is sleep. Sleep is a dynamic condition. If you are able to influence the consciousness during deep sleep, you are able to change the destiny of the person. However, before giving any suggestions to another person in deep sleep, you must consult someone who knows the action and reaction of the suggestion on the deeper planes of the mind.

I am only giving you an idea about how to use yoga, not only for handicapped children, but for anyone. The consciousness is more receptive when the person is not awake. If you are able to plant a samskara when someone is sleeping, it is not erasable.

Can one do it to oneself while in slumber?

The best way is by the practice of mantra. Make it a spontaneous awareness of *Om Namah Shivaya*. In sleep you are aware of *Om Namah Shivaya*, or whichever mantra it might be. That is the best way. You can make yourself free like this, otherwise you must have some lesson tape-recorded.

The third way is to practise yoga nidra yourself. Practise the preliminaries as I usually teach, come to a point and then start. Continue the yoga nidra for half an hour or twenty minutes and after that, start speaking to yourself. I think for that yoga nidra is not necessary. Yoga nidra is really necessary for those who we are not able to contact on a conscious plane.

How can you know whether kundalini is awakened or not? How can you know what stage a person has reached?

Your guru must tell you at what stage of evolution you are. As for the awakening of kundalini, there are not one but

various experiences and symptoms. It depends on the chakra which is in operation. According to the evolution of your life from previous births, you may not start the awakening from mooladhara chakra. Swadhisthana, ajna or anahata or anything may wake up. Therefore, my experience and your experience will not be the same.

The deity or *ishta devata* on which you have been concentrating must be clear. That is one indication that the awakening has taken place. It must be as clear as myself or yourself. It is not a vision, not a dream. It is exactly the same inside as it would be outside. It comes in the snap of the fingers, a glimpse of the reality within, the awakening of the ishta devata within, but it appears as if it is happening outside. The bhaktas say that they see their ishta devata outside, but actually everything is taking place within. It is not a hallucination. There is no doubt about it! That is one of the indications of awakening, it is called darshan.



28

Yoga Research in Munger

*14th Foundation Day of the Bihar School of Yoga,
24 January 1977*

Munger is very isolated; it is not a place of pilgrimage. Those who come here have to change trains three times, so they think twice before deciding to make the journey. Here on the banks of the Ganga is Ananda Bhavan, the place where I practised hatha yoga. Later I decided to stay because I liked this place very much.

Now people are coming to Munger from all over the world in order to learn yoga, not only Indians but people from all religions and walks of life. Today the situation in the world is such that everyone from king to beggar is perplexed and restless. People want to learn yoga, to concentrate their mind in order to find peace. This is why our small ashram is transmitting the message of yoga to the whole world.

Previously yoga was practised only for self-realization, but today yoga is used by people everywhere to free their body and mind of disease and tension. The top scientists and doctors, whether from America or the socialist countries, are engaged in this research. From my own investigations I found that through meditation, japa, mantra, kirtan, asana and pranayama, changes take place within the physical body and within the mind.

Hundreds of thousands of dollars are being spent to open yogic research centres all over the world. There should be complete coordination in these investigations, but there is not. Sometimes news of new research is published in different scientific journals and magazines, but the average person does not have access to the findings of different research being carried out in Yugoslavia, France, Australia and India.

Most people know about the latest films, but new experiments and investigations are hardly discussed. There is no adequate medium to convey the latest yogic research and its implications to the people in a form which can be understood by all. For this reason the Bihar School of Yoga has started a Research Coordinating Centre.

Many of my sannyasin disciples are doctors, engineers, philosophers and psychologists. They have left their countries and homes to come here and take up this work. Being highly trained, they have a basic understanding of the scientific yogic research going on around the world. Therefore, whatever research is being done in the East and West, they will bring back here, correlate it and convey it in a readable form to the people.

I am a member of a large number of institutions, but not one of them is transmitting its findings to the public in a systematic, effective and far-reaching way. These investigations cannot just be explained in lectures, for some people may understand but many will not. We do not expect every person to understand what alpha intensity is. Therefore, first the doctors and scientists should become familiar with these ideas, and then they can explain them to the people in a more comprehensible manner.

Our aim is to convey information about all the investigations going on in the world. How are alpha waves produced while doing kirtan? How does japa influence blood pressure? What is the effect of relaxation on the mind? What does science have to say about yoga? Through meditation changes can be brought about in man's emanations, in his electrical and magnetic centres. Physical, emotional and

mental health can be improved. This is not to say that the medical sciences, surgery, or ayurveda are of no use. Our ancestors developed many systems of medical treatment to relieve us from all diseases, and one of these systems is yoga. The research being done around the world will throw much light on the possibilities of yoga therapy.

We must be more aware of our yogic culture. Over the past five hundred years we have forgotten it, and spiritual knowledge has nearly disappeared. Today, however, there is a great yogic renaissance going on around the world and spiritual knowledge is again manifesting. More than ever it is necessary for every person to be reminded of this great yogic culture before which the whole world bows down.

Finally, to all yoga lovers I express the wish that they may share their knowledge and experience with us in the form of assistance and cooperation, so that we can impart this knowledge to the maximum number of people through our new research coordinating centre.



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Satsang: Guru-Disciple Relationship

Bihar School of Yoga, Sivanandashram, Munger, 14 January 1977

How should one choose a guru?

The guru should be chosen with a background of faith. The one who has faith will find a guru. People who are sincerely seeking the spiritual way of life will become disillusioned with the miracle performers and the gurus who exhibit siddhis for selfish reasons. The self-realized guru is high on the spiritual plane, beyond the psychic plane from which these powers arise. He has no need to perform these siddhis for his disciples.

If you seek a guru you must approach the search with an unselfish heart and pure faith, then you will find your true guru. Pure faith will never fail you, but the search also depends on your state of consciousness. If you seek money, you will find money; if you look for apples, you will find apples. If you search for a guru with a selfish purpose and an ignorant background, then those who display powers will appear.

What is the relationship between guru and disciple, and what are their duties towards each other?

The relationship between guru and disciple is deeper than all other relations known, including man and wife, friends, or father and son. The wife can live without the husband,

and the husband without the wife, but for the true guru and disciple, who share a pure love, the notion of duality disappears and unity takes place.

The main duty of the guru is to help remove the darkness of avidya by guiding the evolution of the spiritual aspirant. In order to do this the guru teaches sadhana on the physical, psychic and spiritual planes, and helps the disciple to follow the correct path. The duty of the disciple is to serve and obey the guru, and to learn from his teachings, gain from his knowledge and so become purified.

A guru is necessary for those people who want to follow the spiritual path and it is important that the relationship is formed correctly. For those who want to practise the meditative way, a raja yoga guru is necessary. If they want to transcend through the path of karma yoga, they must have a karma yoga guru, and the same applies to the bhakti and jnana yoga aspirants.

What is the difference between the relationship of the guru and the sannyasin, and the guru and the householder?

The relationship between guru and disciple is always the same whether the disciple is a swami or a householder. It is difficult to explain, as it is not something material that I can describe like a flower which is round or long, red or white. The relationship between guru and disciple is not physical, emotional or mental. It is apart from these and above these. It is only *atman*, the soul, guru's soul and disciple's soul. It does not matter what the guru looks like, whether he is intelligent or foolish, good, emotional, lovable or rude. You have made him your guru because your soul has felt that he is your guru.

What is the link between guru and disciple?

I have always lived a very independent life and have had no personal or intimate connections with anything, whether individual or object, I have never surrendered to anybody out of loyalty, but there is one person in my life who has

permeated my consciousness through and through, and he is my guru. It was not that I wanted it, no, but somehow this happened.

Love is intense awareness, total awareness, non-dual awareness of one person, but in my case this did not happen. I never thought much about my guru, but in my final analysis I realized that he loved me and always thought about me. Even when he entered mahasamadhi and freed himself from his mortal frame, he became so much aware of me that, wantingly or unwantingly, I had to work.

When a guru loves his disciple, he is always aware of him, always thinking about him, and he suffers from a disciple neurosis. When the disciple loves the guru so much that he can think of nothing else, he has a guru neurosis. This is a strong form of shakti. In the *Ramayana* there is a story about a ten-headed monster, Ravana, who was Sri Rama's rank enemy. Later on he became his greatest devotee because he thought about him day and night.

Awareness is love. If you are aware of guru all the time, you love him and this is a powerful link.

What is love for the guru?

In order to know it, you must practise it. This is not the same type of love that exists between family members, but something much greater and longer lasting. The relationship is neither rational nor emotional, but of a psychic nature. The spiritual interaction between a guru and disciple takes place without any disturbance to the mind and the guru's presence is always felt. The moment the disciple thinks of the guru, his mind quietens and communion takes place.

When relationships are of an emotional nature, there is no peace, only disturbance, but the relationship between guru and disciple is complete without any emotional or negative reaction. This is because on higher levels of psychic interaction, the emotions are more subdued and do not play a great part. After a few years of developing this relationship

you will experience how the mind can think and function in a different way, and you will experience this love.

How can I maintain a relationship with you without knowing you personally?

This should not be the attitude of a disciple. The distance is only physical. In fact, guru and disciple are inseparable entities. They are linked together by an invisible thread. It is not important that we live together physically, but guru and disciple should be together in spirit. They should be together in the inner consciousness and thereby the spiritual upliftment takes place rapidly.

What does it mean to surrender to guru?

In the Upanishads there is a story about a king and a rishi, Janaka and Yagyavalkya, which illustrates this. When the rishi came to the royal court, the king asked what he could offer him. The rishi replied, "Whatever is your own." The king said, "Very well, I can offer you 10,000 cows." The rishi declined this offer saying, "But they are not yours, they belong to your empire. I will only accept something which is your own." The king thought about this and then said, "I will offer you one of my sons." Again the rishi replied, "Your son is also not your own."

The discussion continued and the rishi declined all the king's offerings on the grounds that he did not really own them. At last the king said, "Alright, I will offer myself to you." Then the rishi asked, "What do you mean by that? Who are you?" After some deep thought the king replied, "I do not know myself, so I can not give you that, but I will give you my mind. Surely that is my own."

However, the rishi was still not satisfied and said, "If you give me your mind, you will have to stop thinking. Are you prepared to do that?" The king asked, "Can't I give you my mind as it is?" The rishi said, "No. If you give me your mind, it means that you will think of me and nothing else unless I have specifically permitted it. What is the point of

giving away five hundred rupees and then spending them on yourself?"

So saying, the rishi left the court. After a few months he returned, "Tell me honestly and seriously," he said to the king, "whether you are now ready to give me your mind. I don't want to hear about your property, your empire, your queen or your children." The king replied, "No. I am not ready yet." So, the rishi went away and came back a third time. During his absence the emperor had prepared his mind through yoga. "This time," he said, "I will try to offer you my mind. If I fail, forgive me."

The rishi accepted the king as his disciple and from that day onward the king's mind stopped thinking about everything except his guru. He spent his time quietly in meditation and became a jivanmukta. He did not eat, move or discharge his duties. The people reported this to the guru, who called the king. "Now it is time for you to get back to the business of ruling the kingdom," he said, "this is my order."

That is the concept of surrender. You give your limited self away and receive it back again in fullness. Surrender is not giving up your freedom, like the king. It is not a matter of prostrating yourself before the guru and saying, "Guruji, I am here, protect me, take me in." How can he take you in and how can you go in? It is a hard psychic process, but if you want to make quick progress on the spiritual path, surrender is a must. Once the guru has absolute control over your mind and psyche, he will make you spiritually powerful.

Surrender is a natural urge in man. When the surrender is complete, your thoughts are one with the thoughts of the guru, then every word that he speaks comes true in your life. This I know from my own experience. If the disciple is disobedient and obstinate, with a personality of his own, though this may be a good thing in its own right, the guru's words will not come true for him. This is a psychic law.

When the disciple has completely surrendered and his mind is connected with the guru's mind, he is not only guided in conscious moments but also during meditation. In certain

stages of meditation there is darkness, a valley through which the disciple is unable to pass, but the voice of the guru carries him beyond it. If he cannot obey the guru on the conscious plane, he certainly cannot do so on the unconscious plane.

Even if the disciple is told to perform the most difficult action, he will be able to carry it out if the unconscious mind is obedient to the guru. The purpose of surrender is to become an efficient instrument of the guru on all levels. If the disciple's surrender is complete, when the guru tells him, "This will happen through you," it will happen. The guru can work wonders through the disciple who has surrendered.

What is the main obstacle to the emergence of the satguru?

The obstacle lies in the behaviour of the human mind. If you light a candle in the middle of a room and keep the windows open, what will happen? If a hurricane, cyclone or storm comes, it will affect the candle flame. The flame will fluctuate and its behaviour will be inconsistent. Things within us happen in the same way. Our consciousness does not behave in a constant or consistent manner, like the candle flame, it is dissipated and fragmented.

To become aware of this, just close your eyes and observe the behaviour of the mind. Do not try to control it. Just watch it and find out exactly what it is doing. You will find that it is totally schizophrenic. Sometimes it will not even finish a thought. Halfway through one thought it skips onto another, and at the same time it keeps looking back to the one it has just left. This behaviour is not only evidence of uncertainty, but also evidence of schizophrenia.

If you practise antar mouna for a while, you will discover how funny the mind is. The inconsistency of the mind is the main thing which prevents the awakening of the satguru. If your mind could flow constantly in one direction for just half a minute or even ten seconds, enlightenment would take place instantaneously. I am not talking about thought here; I am talking about the mind. Thought is only one small expression of the mind.

Mind itself is a homogeneous instrument of awareness, and that awareness is total. If that homogeneous mind could stop for just a moment, an explosion would occur. A moment might seem to be a short time, but you must remember that the mind never remains still even for a fraction of a moment. Usually it vibrates at a very high speed, and when it vibrates in this way, we say that the mind is dissipated. The satguru cannot emerge in this state of mind. It can only emerge in a mind which has become steady and still.

How can one achieve inner communication with the guru in order to receive his guidance?

The mind, the emotions and the spirit of the guru and disciple must become of the same quality. When there is a resistance in the disciple, he is a non-conductor. He does not allow the energy to pass through him. If there is the least bit of ego or difference, or a tendency of separation, the energy is not conducted. There must be absolute oneness between guru and disciple in all spheres, not particularly physical, emotional, mental, psychic or spiritual, but in all spheres, just as the mother and child communicate with each other psychically, even over long distances. If something happens to the child, the mother knows it.

In order to establish better communication with the guru, first of all, the disciple will have to surrender his mind. The guru's mind, emotions, personality and psyche, should become so integrated in his disciple that at any point the disciple's mind can merge in the guru. The disciple has to open himself completely, mentally and spiritually. Just as milk and sugar become completely mixed with each other, so it is with the guru and disciple. They both imbibe each other's qualities and the communication takes place.

Does every evolving soul need a guru to break through the final barrier?

It is true that guru is internal, but to say that guru is internal is not enough; for you have to experience it. If your inner

guru becomes a matter of experience and can guide you, and you can be sure that he is guiding you, and it is not your mind guiding you disguised as guru, then it is perfectly alright.

If God, truth, the path and the goal are one, why do the masters and guides differ in their conceptions and sometimes even contradict one another?

The self-realized masters did not speak differently about the truth. They were unanimous about their pronouncements, but what they spoke was transmitted by their disciples who still had limitations and prejudices. Thus the differences came about; and they will continue. The truth, the path and the goal are one, nobody has said otherwise, but their followers have their own philosophies which differ. It cannot be helped.

How does one know one has become a guru?

The disciples will know and the disciples will tell.

What should the life of a sannyasin be?

The life as a sannyasin is a life of absolute dedication. A sannyasin must have a guru and he should become an efficient tool in the hands of his guru. You should not say that you do not need a guru because he is already inside. This kind of reasoning is a product of ego. If guru is inside, wife is also inside. Why do you need her?

As a newly initiated sannyasin, you must retire for some years to the peaceful surroundings of the guru's ashram, live with other swamis and adjust your ego to theirs. When your mind is stabilized properly, you must try to understand what humanity needs. Then you travel from place to place, guiding people towards a practical way of life. As you travel, gaining knowledge and intuition, you must have a definite goal in mind. You must be a clear thinker, saying whatever you think, and you must know about yoga and Vedanta for the benefit and evolution of the whole society.

We sannyasins believe that everybody should practise something for his physical and mental health and for his illumination. We teach asanas, pranayama, yoga nidra, concentration, meditation, kirtan and other practices which people can integrate into their daily life.

It is not easy to describe how a sannyasin should be, because he is a symbol of perfection. He is an embodiment of love, compassion and non-violence. He accepts one and all as his own kith and kin. Therefore, a sannyasin should try to separate himself from the onslaughts of social influence. In order to become a swami, one must know what one really wants. The life of a sannyasin is the highest life. Once you have accepted it, you are indeed blessed, and if you are able to live in the spirit of sannyasa, you are one who walks with God.



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Yoga: The Alpha and the Omega

Indian Embassy, Kathmandu, Nepal, 22 February 1977

Yoga is a vast subject. It encompasses the entire dimension of human existence, the body and all of its components, as well as the spirit which is beyond the body. Yoga is a system which was discovered by the wise rishis and munis thousands of years ago. It was the cultural heritage for the whole of mankind, not only Indians. However, in India, the science of yoga was preserved in spite of the historical accidents and the ravages of time, whereas most cultures, tribes and nations all over the world were unable to preserve their own heritage.

Therefore, yoga is not a Hindu science; it is the science of mankind. Not only is this science respected by the Hindus of India and Nepal, but once it existed around the world. Excavations of Incan, Mayan and Aztec civilizations which flourished thousands of years ago, have unearthed relics clearly depicting hatha yoga practices such as vipareeta karani mudra, neti, jalandhara bandha, vajrasana, sukhasana, vrikshasana and many others. I have visited the museums in South America and photographed these statues.

Yoga research

The science of yoga is not a religion. It has the definite purpose of giving a scientific direction to human evolution. From the ocean of yogic knowledge, one practical and

immediately beneficial system is hatha yoga. In ancient times we had two great gurus, Gorakhnath and Gheranda, who expounded the science of hatha yoga which includes the system of postures known as asanas. The word asana should not be translated as exercises. *Asana* means 'bodily postures'.

Recent scientific investigations in India, Poland, Russia, America, France and Australia have proved beyond any doubt that yogic asanas are completely different from physical exercises. They have a direct influence on the endocrine system and some of the asanas can control the secretion of pituitary hormones. It has been claimed and proven by scientists in America and Australia that the practice of asanas can alleviate some of the incurable diseases of our civilization such as blood pressure, diabetes and asthma.

I have been involved with the research of yogasanas on coronary diseases. If this research proves that yogic exercises do help in coronary diseases, what a fantastic contribution yoga will be able to make towards improving the welfare of mankind. In western countries, heart disease is supposed to be the number one killer. If yoga research is able to prove that asanas can help in the maintenance and repair of the coronary system, yoga will become one of India's finest contributions to the rest of mankind. In 1978, I will submit the whole research report, duly certified by doctors.

I am not the only person who is involved in yoga research. There is also the Yoga Research Institute in the famous temple of King Patapalaji. Research is going on at Kaivalyadhama, which was established in Lonavala by the late Swami Kaivalyananda.

Nervous stress

Asanas should never be considered as physical exercises. Each asana has an immediate bearing on the nervous system and the endocrine glands. For instance, diabetes is caused by insufficient insulin which is secreted by the pancreas, a

gland controlled by the parasympathetic nervous system. If stress, strain, worry, shock, psychosis or neurosis block the parasympathetic nervous system, what happens? The pancreas is not stimulated to produce and secrete sufficient insulin, and the moment you lack insulin you have diabetes. By clearing the block in the parasympathetic nervous system through the practice of yoga, you can eliminate diabetes. That is why yoga researchers claim today, that diabetes can be completely eradicated by yoga practices.

There are no epidemics in most modern countries, but there are essential stresses which one cannot evade. Every stress is a blow, a burden on the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems. In this century we believe in the principle of body-mind relationship. A disorder or imbalance on the mental plane will ultimately express itself in the physical body in the form of disease. Modern scientists say that ninety percent of diseases can be immediately traced back to the brain.

The pineal-pituitary complex

Therefore, yoga has an important place in the therapeutic system of our century. To give a simple example, in the old days, Indian children used to be taught surya namaskara, pranayama and Gayatri mantra at the age of seven. However, as time passed, the wise men of this country no longer understood the importance of these practices and so our children no longer learned them. Thus due to ignorance and lack of interest, our cultural heritage is being lost.

However, medical science has recently come up with some amazing factual correlations and new interest in yoga is being revived. At the age of eight the pineal gland starts degenerating. This gland is situated behind the mid-eyebrow centre at the top of the spinal column in the medulla oblongata. In yogic language it relates to ajna chakra. This is a remnant of the animal body in man. The pineal gland acts as a lock. The moment it starts degenerating, the pituitary gland begins to function.

If a child at the age of seven starts practising surya namaskara, pranayama and Gayatri mantra, his pineal gland may continue to function for a few more years until he is more emotionally mature. When sexual and emotional development are harmonized, there is no aggressiveness, no imbalance, no personality complexes. Therefore, yogasanas should never be considered as ordinary exercises. Yoga, which is based on scientific experiments, is an entirely different department from athletics and sports.

Intensifying alpha waves

About ten years ago in America and France, scientists were researching the influence of brain waves on emotional stress. They investigated alpha, beta, theta and delta waves, using an encephalogram (ECG), and found that particular waves manifest at different times and in different areas of the brain. In a person who is sleeping, delta waves are predominant. When relaxed and completely free of tension, alpha waves are intensified. The influence of alpha intensity in the brain immediately acts upon the systolic and diastolic blood pressure. Further investigations have shown that patients suffering from hypertension or high blood pressure could immediately lower it by intensifying the alpha waves.

There are simple methods in the yogic system to induce alpha waves. Scientific experiments have proved that the practice of asana, pranayama and concentration can produce an intensity of alpha waves which will immediately bring the blood pressure down. This gives many people a concrete reason to start practising yoga.

The major practices

The most important asanas are:

Surya namaskara, salutation to the sun, is a formulation of twelve poses. With each pose, you have to recite one particular mantra, and every posture has to be synchronized with the breath. Surya namaskara is beneficial for all children.

Paschimottanasana, back stretching pose, is a simple asana. It reduces fat and is important for sublimating or increasing the activity of the pancreas. Diabetics and those who are unhappy about their figure should practise this asana.

Vajrasana, thunderbolt pose, should be performed after meals. It increases the digestive fire and whenever you have any kind of dysentery, gastric trouble or indigestion, vajrasana should be practised after lunch and dinner for as long as you can manage.

Sarvangasana, the shoulder stand, rejuvenates the thyroid gland. Those who are suffering from pyorrheal infection and prolapse should practise sarvangasana in the morning for three to five minutes every day.

Makarasana, the crocodile pose, is good for slipped disc. People who sleep on comfortable soft mattresses should practise it. The normal structure of the spinal column should be straight, but when you sleep on soft spring mattresses every night, the spinal cord remains in a bent state and one develops slipped disc and sciatica. Makarasana should be practised for long periods to correct this condition.

Bhujangasana, the cobra pose, is for spinal deformities. Bhujangasana should be followed by *shalabhasana*, the locust pose. Both correct spinal problems.

Remember, yogasanas should be practised on an empty stomach, not even tea or lemon water should be taken before.

Shavasana, corpse pose, is the pose of relaxation. Most difficult of all the arts in the world is relaxation. Lying down on your bed with a little bit of tranquillizer is not relaxation, that is tension. Man has not yet learned the art of relaxation. To practise it, first lie down and bring your awareness to the breath. Be aware of breathing in and breathing out. Focus your mind on the air passage in your nostrils. Practise one hundred rounds. Count your breath from one hundred back to zero. If you lose count, go back and start again. This relaxation is necessary. After doing asanas you must relax in shavasana.

The practice of pranayama increases vitality by purifying the nervous, respiratory and circulatory systems. Pranayama does not pertain to the breath and lungs alone, it is also used for intensifying the practice of meditation. In the system of yogic breathing, there are twelve major pranayamas. By the practice of yogic breathing, perfect health can be obtained.

Bhramari pranayama, humming bee breath, is the safest and best practice. In this practice the sound of a humming bee is produced. It has been shown that continual, uninterrupted sound waves, such as the humming sound in *bhramari*, intensify alpha waves when they are registered by the brain. You can play this humming sound on a tape recorder to a high blood pressure patient, letting him lie so that the earphone hums in his ear. Within half an hour his blood pressure will definitely fall because the alpha waves produced will lower the diastolic pressure.

In America an earphone was invented with a little tape in it which played this humming sound very softly for ten or fifteen minutes. When the alpha waves were increased, the earphone was removed. This is like a magic pill, and many people in factories use it. *Bhramari* is the best pranayama to relax your tensions and lower your blood pressure.

Bhastrika, the bellows breathing, is good for low blood pressure. It purifies the whole system and brings complete tranquillity to the mind. After *bhastrika*, the mind is quiet as if completely arrested. During *bhastrika* the abdomen, diaphragm, chest and shoulders expand and contract. That is the correct way of breathing, as the lungs are filled up. Otherwise we just breathe through the chest and only a minimum of oxygen is inhaled. This leads to all kinds of diseases like asthma. We don't know where they come from, so we take hopeless pills to try to get rid of them. However, many diseases are caused by inefficient breathing. If we walk clumsily down the road and fall, breaking a leg, it is our mistake, and so it is with poor breathing.

Nadi shodhana, psychic network purification, is a technique to correct the breathing. During this practice the

abdomen, chest and shoulders expand to completely fill the lungs with oxygen. Nadi shodhana eliminates bronchitis, asthma, cough and cold. The *nadis* are psychic channels through which mental impulses, vital impulses and prana shakti flow throughout the body. Nadi shodhana is the pranayama which purifies the nadis. Retention of the breath gives control over the coronary walls and muscles.

The higher yoga

Whenever the word yoga is heard, the mind becomes calm and quiet and we have a hope of bringing light into the darkness. Yoga won't eliminate the need for doctors, but it will help greatly to solve and reduce many medical problems. First hatha yoga helps the body to maintain health. Then practices of sensory withdrawal, concentration and meditation, *pratyahara*, *dharana* and *dhyana*, help you to realize the deeper nature of yourself, to unite with your own atman. Do you know who you are and what you are? How can you even think about it with a mind which is confused? How can you imagine your real wealth, your true nature, with this mind so full of conflicts, cobwebs and schizophrenia? Your mind must be properly purified and when the slate is clean, you can close your eyes and contemplate your real nature.

Yoga begins with hatha yoga and ends with union between the lower consciousness and the higher consciousness, *jivatma* and *paramatma*. Yoga means complete equanimity within yourself and with everybody else, with the vast nature and the whole cosmos. Yoga is complete acceptance of anything in life, whether pain or pleasure, defeat or victory, disease or death. Yoga brings about a complete understanding of the whole process of creation.

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The Yogic Solution for Human Suffering

Lion's Club, Kathmandu, Nepal, 23 February 1977

When I was young I didn't know anything about yoga. During my student life I was always healthy. I have never had any physical, mental or emotional problems. After completing my formal education I went to Swami Sivananda, my guru in Rishikesh. I didn't go to him in order to learn yoga. All I wanted was a more complete life. I had a philosophy and a religion of my own. I had definite views about life and I didn't want to be in the same category as my parents. I wanted to be different from them. I asked my father, "Are you happy with your way of life?" He said, "No." So I asked, "Then why do you want me to live like that? Let me make a different life for myself."

I went to my guru to live a monastic life, to evolve my personality and my whole being. I lived with him for twelve years and after that I lived a homeless life as a *parivrajaka*, a wandering mendicant, for nine years. During my period of wandering, I went all over India and I came to Nepal several times, not as a preacher, but as a beggar. I also went to Afghanistan, Burma and Ceylon. I travelled by foot, bullock cart, elephant, train and plane. While I was wandering, I realized how much man was suffering. Wherever I went, people came to me with their problems and I had no answer for them.

In 1956 I came to Munger and decided to find a solution for the people. I had a solution for myself and I didn't need

hatha yoga, raja yoga or karma yoga. However, humanity was suffering and I felt that yogic techniques could definitely provide a solution for them. What about medical science, psychiatry and prosperity? People have those things and still they are suffering, which means that they are not the solution. The answer had to be found somewhere else.

I stayed in Munger off and on from 1956 to 1963. In 1963 I found the answer – yoga. Munger is a backward place and the property which was given to me there for founding an ashram was small, but I stayed because Munger is the place where I found a solution for the suffering of humanity.

Yoga and health

I have been all over the world, not once but many times, and I have found that everywhere people are looking for illumination. The physical, mental and spiritual problems confronting people of this modern civilization are innumerable. They are beyond the knowledge of doctors or the control of the government. They are beyond the mental hospitals which will never be able to save humanity. Therefore, in 1964, I started this yoga movement. At that time I did not have a single disciple. Today I have yoga centres all over the world, not because I am a good organizer, but because the principles and practices of yoga are scientifically based. They have already been well tested by the rishis and munis in our land for thousands of years.

Today yoga can accept the challenge of modern scientists who started yogic research with doubt and scepticism, but who were soon fantastically impressed by the direct correlations they found between science and yoga. Yogic research is being carried out in many countries around the world. I am personally involved with yogic research into the effects of asanas on coronary diseases. This research project is sponsored by the central Government of India, and the Chief Research Officer is Dr Shreenivas, head of the Cardiology Department at the Patna Medical College Hospital. This research is almost complete. Over seven

hundred heart patients have been referred to us by the hospital and we have succeeded in helping them towards self-rehabilitation using yogic techniques.

Practical experiments on hypertension and high blood pressure have also been conducted in Bombay by Dr K.K. Datey who has proved that the practices of pranayama and yoga nidra can bring down high blood pressure without the help of medicine. These are just a few examples, but from them we can understand that hatha yoga, the system of asanas and pranayama which we teach to people, is not a religious practice. It is more than that. It is a practice for health.

Solution to our ailments

I have spent many years teaching asanas and pranayamas throughout the length and breadth of India and around the world. People are grateful and realized that something important had come to them from the ancient rishis and munis. This tradition of rishis and munis, the saviours and the saints, is very old. They were not idiot beggars, they were masters of the human body and mind. The way they explained yoga was simply fantastic. They spoke about ida, pingala and sushumna. In medical science these are called the parasympathetic, sympathetic and central nervous systems. The rishis said that when ida and pingala nadis work in complete harmony with each other, man lives a balanced life. In the same way, medical science has proven that when the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous impulses are in balance with each other, one has a balanced personality. If they are out of balance, one will have mental or physical problems.

Yogasanas and pranayamas are important for everybody, especially people suffering from diseases and insomnia. I have many yoga teachers who go to mental hospitals and teach hatha yoga, purification of the nadis and all the different systems of the body. Exactly as you clean your car, change the oil, tune it, do the servicing and repairs, in the same way hatha yoga is a system by which you repair the

body and accelerate its functional efficiency by cleaning the whole nervous system.

Hatha yoga practices are powerful. The practice of *neti kriya* alone will help to relieve sinusitis which doctors have been struggling with for decades. *Neti* is a simple technique done with a small pot of saline water which you pour through one nostril and out the other. It takes barely five minutes. Cases of adenoids, polyps, sinusitis and mucus infections in the nose can be properly healed just by this simple *kriya*. There are many different hatha yoga practices and they provide a solution for the ailments of our present generation.

Yoga and psychosomatic diseases

A famous psychologist, Dr Sigmund Freud, said, "With the advancement of civilization, the body-mind relationship will suffer from other dimensions of disease." When you suffer from cough today, the cause is not the same as it was fifty years ago. The discomfort of cough, cold, asthma or bronchitis is the same as it was fifty years ago, but the cause is not the same. Today man is living only in the body. The first impressions are received in the mind and then transferred to the body in the form of a disease.

For example, I know a businessman. He had an eighteen year old son. One day the son went swimming and drowned. When the father found out, he did not weep. He was dumbfounded, silent, unable to express his agony. From that moment on he started having asthmatic attacks. He suffered from asthma for three years until he heard that I could treat him. He came to me and I taught him hatha yoga practices. I also taught him *antar mouna*, a practice whereby he could express his agony. He had to cry, to release his sorrow, but first he had to go back to the point of agony, to the place where the disease began. That businessman is alright now. Our sufferings start from the depths of our personality. Therefore, the practices of hatha yoga must be coupled with *raja yoga* or meditation.

Yoga for children

Yoga is a science and an important part of education. Therefore, I have been trying my best in India and abroad to integrate it at all levels of education. In ancient days, children were taught three practices – surya namaskara, nadi shodhana pranayama and Gayatri mantra, at the time of the sacred thread ceremony around the age of seven or eight. Now the parents are unable to teach their children the significance of these practices, for they themselves no longer understand the real meaning behind them.

At the top of the spinal cord there is a small gland about the size of a peanut. Modern science calls it the pineal gland. In yoga it is related to ajna chakra or the guru chakra. It is situated directly behind the mid-eyebrow centre. This gland is a remnant of the animal body. It remains intact up to the age of seven and then it starts degenerating. The pineal gland is a lock for the pituitary gland. As long as the pineal is functioning, the secretion of the pituitary hormones is controlled.

The pituitary is in the mid-brain. It secretes different groups of hormones called pituitary hormones. In yoga the pituitary gland is related to sahasrara chakra, the place of Paramshiva, the thousand-petalled lotus. The pituitary hormones interact with all the bodily functions. At a particular moment in life, this gland sends forth the hormones which develop our masculine or feminine personality. Thus we become male or female, physically as well as emotionally.

Our sex glands are formed and become operative only when ajna chakra or the pineal gland starts degenerating. As long as a child has a functioning pineal gland, his sexual aggressiveness will never manifest. This is why sadhus and mahatmas concentrate on ajna chakra. As long as this chakra or the pineal gland is intact and healthy, sexual life will be perfectly balanced. Thus parents of old used to teach their children surya namaskara, nadi shodhana pranayama and Gayatri mantra, so that they could live a balanced life until the age of maturity. This is a scientific application of yoga.

Business management and yoga

In western countries the scientists and doctors have started flashing red signals saying, “Medicine is dangerous.” Medicines are necessary, but at the same time, one has to depend more on yoga. Big industries everywhere are conducting yoga courses for their executives. In India we have also started it. Hindustan Steel Ltd gives yoga courses for their managers and executives. In Ranchi there are fifteen-day yoga courses together with management training classes for forty to fifty managers at a time. At BCC, Bihar Coke and Coal Ltd, the biggest coal authority in India, we have compared yoga with other methods and the statistics have shown that yoga scores very high. Therefore, in our daily life as well as in business, yoga can help us to increase our efficiency.

Self-discovery

I am not opposed to any other system of physical exercise. I have studied almost all of them, including judo and karate, but I know that they are limited. The contribution of yoga to humanity is far greater as a messenger of peace. We need yoga practices such as yoga nidra, prana vidya, neti and dhauti. Guru Gorakhnath, one of the most important exponents of hatha yoga, has explained in his book *Goraksha Samhita* what hatha yoga is. When you have mastered hatha yoga, you can go on to the practice of meditation.

Meditation is not necessarily concentration on God, it is realization of the inner dimension of your personality. You have much more within than you know. Man is infinite. His mind is powerful and capable, but he hasn't realized this yet. The individual awareness is potentially cosmic. Therefore, it is important that everybody should devote ten minutes each day to its discovery. With meditation, *dhyana yoga*, you start a new chapter in your life. Once you are involved in dhyana yoga and in doing your practices in the correct way, your experiences and personality will become steady and lasting. Your attitude towards yourself and your life will be fantastic.

32

Scientific Yoga

*Residence of Nancy Hausner, Kathmandu, Nepal,
21 February 1977*

In 1956 when we started the Yoga Fellowship, there was ignorance and misunderstanding of yoga everywhere. When I was on my first world tour in 1968–69, I found that it was difficult for people to understand exactly what yoga meant. Some had vague and incomplete information and thought yoga was a kind of magic or psychic feat. They were not able to understand or place yoga in the scheme of their lives. We started working in Munger, training sannyasins and sending them all over the world in order to show people what yoga meant.

More interesting, however, is the series of scientific evaluations of yoga which have developed in recent years. Scientists and doctors all over the world are now trying to understand how and why yoga has such a great influence on the human body and mind. Research conducted in the USSR, Poland, France, England, America, Australia and India, has proved beyond any doubt that the practices of yoga are a scientific process by which physical and mental diseases can be overcome. Yoga is not merely practised to tone the body or reduce fat. Scientists are conducting research into the influence of yogic practices on the brainwave patterns.

These beta, alpha, delta and theta waves control human behaviour. Whether you are angry or pleased, full

of compassion or anxious and afraid, you are under the influence of these waves. However, by creating particular waves you can influence the brain. Yoga practices enable you to control the behaviour of these brainwave patterns. In addition to the scientific experiments which have been made in many countries on brainwave therapy, medical experts have been talking about the scientific effects of yoga practices on the nervous system.

The sympathetic, parasympathetic and central nervous systems control our sensory cortex. We are controlled by the nervous system. If it fails to carry the impulses or is unable to control the impulses, mental and physical problems arise. Scientists have come to the conclusion that most of the diseases that are in the body have their origin in the mind via the emotions. An emotional situation causes a mental vibration, a mental wave, and through the body-mind relationship this influence is transferred to the body in the form of a disease like asthma, diabetes or insomnia. People who want to reduce fat and have a beautiful figure must remember that the metabolism in the body is controlled by the mind, which is influenced by the emotions. When you are in the grip of fear, the adrenal glands secrete adrenalin directly into the blood stream. This immediately affects the coronary artery and therefore the heart, causing heart pain which is known as angina.

Some of my disciples are now working on Kirlian photography. The Kirlians were electronic engineers who came to the conclusion that this physical body which we see through our naked eye has radiations which cannot be seen. These invisible radiations are electrical charges conducted by the body. The Kirlians discovered how to photograph these radiations at a high voltage or frequency field.

When we define yoga, we have to be careful. Some people say that hatha yoga is the definition, others say, meditation is yoga. For some people hatha yoga is more important and for others meditation, but the effect of both is the same on the human body and mind. What is achieved by meditation can

also be achieved by hatha yoga and vice versa. Hatha yoga is not only physical in nature. The practices of asana and pranayama have an immediate influence on the body, the endocrine glands and the nervous system. Pranayama affects the psychic centres of the body. When the body is purified, free from toxins, and your nervous systems are capable of carrying all the impulses throughout the body, the psychic centres awaken.

Even by practising hatha yoga a spiritual or semi-spiritual state can be achieved. Others feel that the same thing can be accomplished by simple meditation. Meditation affects the whole metabolism. It can control all the electrical impulses, the prana or the magnetism in the body by which you live, talk, think and participate in all kinds of activities. Raja yoga is an important part of yoga, and scientists have conducted many experiments on people in meditation. How does meditation affect the rate of oxygen consumption? What happens to the skin resistance? Yoga is not merely a set of exercises; it is much more than that. One who practises yoga systematically can accelerate his spiritual evolution.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

I thought that hatha yoga led to raja yoga, yet you say that they are equal?

Hatha yoga is part of raja yoga. I do not consider hatha yoga to be merely physical. We are aware of the physical body first, because our awareness dwells in the physical body. We have to start with physical awareness, but, if you are not particularly aware of the physical body, if you have evolved to the mental body, you must start from there.

Hatha yoga concerns itself with the perfection or the purification of the different portions of the physical body, while raja yoga pertains to the mind. However, if you just sit for meditation with an impure body, a vacillating mind and an unbalanced nervous system, you will not really progress spiritually. Therefore, hatha yoga is a part of raja yoga.

What is tantra?

Actually tantra is the *Om* of yoga. From tantra, yoga has emerged. Tantra and yoga are inseparable. Tantra goes side by side with the yogic practices. What we want in life can be achieved by tantra and by yoga. Tantra awakens the psychic body, the kundalini shakti. Tantra is a system by which you liberate or separate the two aspects of matter and consciousness, Purusha and Prakriti or Shiva and Shakti. Sometimes matter rules over consciousness and sometimes consciousness rules over matter. When consciousness rules over matter, there is spiritual vision. When matter rules over consciousness, there is creation.

These twin energies live and work together in total agreement with each other. As long as matter and consciousness are united, existence continues in a set pattern. However, by the practice of tantra, you can separate matter from consciousness, Prakriti from Purusha or Shakti from Shiva, and the awakening takes place. What we are aware of within us is a combination of the two. We are aware of matter, the material body, and mind, the 'I', the senses and the objects of perception. We are aware of all these sections at the same time.

By the practice of tantra the awareness is withdrawn from all sections and centred on one point – I. That is the separation of Prakriti from Purusha and that is tantra. How do you practise it? There are many ways. The most important part of tantra is mantra and next comes kriya. With the help of mantra and kriya yoga, you can awaken the dormant potential power known as *kundalini shakti*. This is the prime purpose, the ultimate reality in tantra and in human evolution.

Do you practise yoga all the time?

Yoga is a part of life. Swamis live a yogic life for the evolution of body, mind and consciousness. We do not practise yoga all day long. The hatha yoga and raja yoga sciences are meant for householders and not for renunciates. We do not need to practise them. Yoga practices are for people who are under

stress and strain, who are facing emotional, psychological and physical problems in their lives.

Yoga practices are mainly for people who live in the world, who have a worldly mind. They accumulate a lot of problems within themselves and when they are unable to eliminate all those problems, they take the help of yogasanas, pranayama, meditation, and so on.

For swamis, yoga is not a practice. We live a yogic life within ourselves and for us life is all fullness. In the ashram we work, perhaps more than a householder does. Most of us get up at 3 am and by four o'clock we are on duty. Those sannyasins who work in the kitchen, office or printing press, report for work very early. For us, work is the most important thing in life, and the work we do brings us great peace and pleasure. We don't study or practise yoga for ourselves. Yoga practices are unnecessary for those who have accepted and understood the mind. Householders and people who live in the world have to practise yoga as a part of their daily routine in order to be able to face the situations of life, but once you are free from those situations, you don't really need yoga.

What are the stages of sannyasa?

When we become sannyasins, for the first few years we live with a guru and try to imbibe the best from him. We seek his guidance for a particular period which is traditionally twelve years, and after this we become mendicants. We leave the ashram and we are on our own. Having been trained by the guru for a period of twelve years, we have become responsible thinkers. We know how to live without being caught up in *maya* or temptations. For some period we keep on walking just like beggars. I have been to Kathmandu a number of times just like a beggar, sleeping somewhere in a tent, on a lawn or in some wayside hut.

By living with many different people and having different experiences, we come to understand the way people think, how and why they suffer, the purpose of life and what exactly evolution means. By meeting thousands of people for a

number of years we come to a conclusion as to what should be done. Then we establish ourselves at one particular place and the disciples gather around.

When I was moving about all over India, Ceylon, Afghanistan, Nepal and Burma, I had a vision and in my mind came yoga. I was never a fanatic about yoga. My personal spiritual life consisted of total surrender. This is my nature and right from childhood, I had always envisioned surrender as the highest reality. Still when I was moving all around, I realized that yoga was the need of the people. So, I started teaching yoga. Now everybody is doing yoga.

There are many swamis, however, who do not involve themselves with establishments or organizations. They just want to live an independent life. That is another way.

What does God mean to sannyasins?

We feel that God is within. God is the subtle or spirit body in everyone. When you have illumination within you, you don't seek it any more. God is a symbol for the beginner, but one who is illumined has found God within. When you start school, you begin with the ABC. However, an older student who already knows the alphabet shouldn't be put into kindergarten. For a beginner the symbol, a cross, flower, lingam, and so on, is necessary, but when awareness is deep, grand and magnificent, what need is there for symbols?

Everything depends upon one's awareness. If you want to enter into the temple of God, in the beginning, of course, you can do it externally, but that alone will not bring you to God. Visiting temples is like going to kindergarten. The high temple, Shiva's real dwelling, is only found within. The outer temples only symbolize what is found inside. The external holy places and shrines are built of brick and mortar on the basis of the envisioned model that people have experienced within themselves. A Shiva temple or any outer shrine is only an expression of what is found within.

It is important to know the way to the inner shrine. Only by entering the inner shrine can one know God, the deity

dwelling there. Once you have had a vision of the deity within your temple, which is not material, not brick and mortar, why go to outer shrines? Temples and shrines are necessary in the beginning, but there is a period when one has to transcend them because they are symbols. As long as you are aware of them, you are within the boundaries of the mind. In order to experience reality, one has to transcend these boundaries, because God is beyond the limited, finite mind.

In order to know God, you have to transcend the mind. There are many techniques which lead to the point or brink where you have to jump over the mind, but I don't think that anyone can teach us how to make this jump. Up to this point your yoga practices, which your guru has given you, or any spiritual practice, can help you. Beyond this point, however, there is no spiritual practice, no yoga practice that can help you and no book has been written on it.

People have tried using LSD and ganja, but that is not transcending the mind, that is not jumping over the mind, that is not spiritual evolution. That is just escaping from the mind for the time being. These drugs dull the mind and that is all. Most of the people who come to me have had LSD and other drugs, but their minds are very dull.

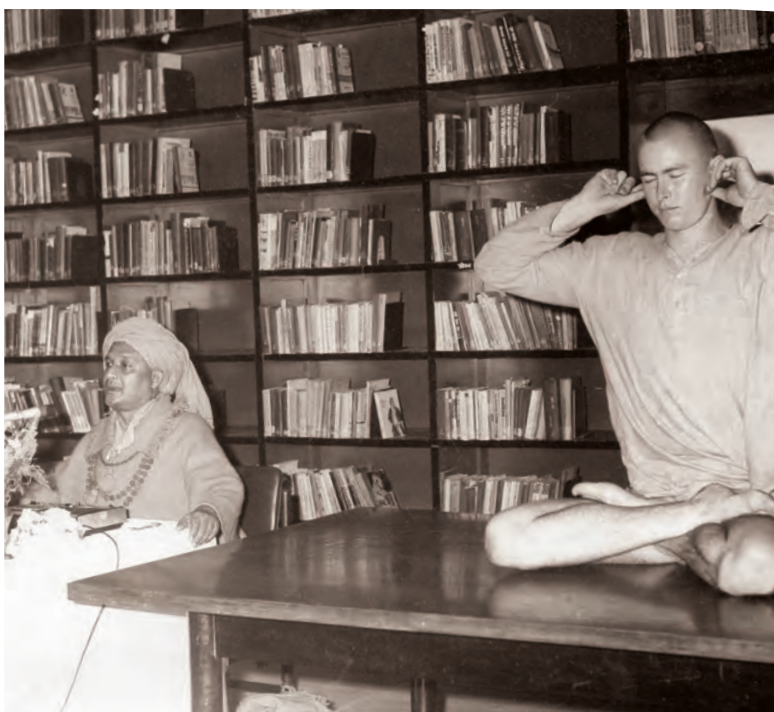
Only one thing can help us to transcend the mind and that is grace. What is grace? Nobody knows. All our spiritual pursuits and religious practices only take us to the edge of this boundary of material consciousness. Up to that point everybody can teach you, but to go beyond that point surpasses all human power. You alone must find the way.

What is the difference between states of consciousness caused by drugs and by meditation?

It is a fact that drug-induced experience totally deprives one of any mental control and one is helplessly tossed about by the emotions. Meditation, however, is a creative process which converts the chaos of uncontrolled feelings, thoughts and volitions into a centre of integrated psychic faculties in the depth of consciousness.

Moreover, the deleterious effects of drugs, physiologically and psychologically, result in deterioration of mental powers. Meditation is impossible unless you are ready for an expansion of consciousness and not every person is ready. However, drugs take one to an experience which one is not ready for. The experience depends on the contents of the individual mind. The same drug may give one person a wonderful new experience and to another a frightening experience which is totally overwhelming.

Yoga is the safest and surest method of attaining mystical experiences, for it initially cleans out and remoulds the whole mind and personality. It is based on the rich experiences of yogis throughout the ages as well as modern scientific research.



33

The Role and Practice of Meditation in Modern Life

MTI, Ranchi, 7 January 1979

There was a time when people needed various interpretations of the value of yoga, because it was thought that yoga was meant for recluses, renunciates and those who are escapists. However, during the last forty years a great change in the interpretation has taken place and our generation today has come to believe, understand and experience that yoga is more for them than for swamis and sannyasis. Yoga primarily concerns the wellbeing of the physical body, the mind, and finally the realization of your real identity with the highest truth in life.

How do the practices of asana, pranayama and dhyana have a positive effect on the body's systems?

Scientists and doctors in India as well as abroad have conducted a lot of research. With their findings they have come to the conclusion that the practice of asanas, pranayama and hatha yoga shatkarmas has a definite and positive effect on the human system. They are not just physical exercises and postures, but are intended for stimulating the endocrine glands, balancing the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems, and regulating the different organs within the body.

Pranayama is no longer considered to be a physical breathing practice for the inhalation of more oxygen and expulsion of carbon dioxide, as it was thought several years ago. Doctors have shown that pranayama is a means by which we can have an indirect control over the function and behaviour of the human brain. Just as the yogasanas have positive effects on the endocrine glands, nervous system, circulatory system and coronary system, in the same way, pranayama has indirect effects on the brain. The thinking processes and all knowledge emanate from the brain which is the computer of the great creator.

This is the physical side of yoga. We have come to the conclusion that the practice of dhyana yoga, which was considered to be a mystical practice in the olden days, is helpful in maintaining a balance between mind and body. Human behaviour, temperament, sentimentality, sensitivity and knowledge, are all affected by the practice of dhyana yoga.

Recent scientific experiments conducted at the Medical College of Barcelona and other laboratories in America and India have brought this truth to us, that the practice of dhyana yoga can change the whole process of thinking, reacting and behaving. Therefore, we must give some time to the techniques of *dhyana yoga*. Dhyana yoga is a part of raja yoga. When the mind becomes aware of one object continuously without interruption, it is said that the mind has attained the state of dhyana yoga. It is not concentration of the mind. Concentration of the mind leads to dhyana. In the state of dhyana yoga the mind becomes free from the external influences and more and more aware of the inner states.

What are the recommended asanas for meditation?

In order to practise dhyana yoga, we have to keep a few things in mind and that will be the main topic. First of all, meditation has to be practised with the spinal column upright and straight. The spinal column is not just a collection of bones; it is a vehicle of the nadis. Ida, pingala and sushumna, the three nadis which control the mental

forces, pranic forces and spiritual forces in the body, pass through the spinal column. Therefore, in meditation the spinal column has to be upright and straight.

The next point is posture. The best posture for dhyana is siddhasana. The second best is padmasana, third best is vajrasana and fourth is swastikasana. If you can't practise any of these, the last is sukhasana. In siddhasana the bottom heel presses the perineum and the upper heel presses the viscera. The perineum is the base of shukra nadi; this is the seat of stimulation.

When you practise siddhasana, you are exerting a pressure on the blood vessels, which push the blood up to the brain. That is the main reason why siddhasana is considered to be the best asana for meditation. It is not because siddhasana is easy, but because shukra nadi in the perineum is pressed and the blood circulation which goes down is pushed upwards.

You need more energy in the brain for the purpose of meditation. When you practise meditation on your bed or on the chair, it is not systematic or scientific. You are only attaining what we call a momentary tranquillity or composure. In meditation, however, we are aiming at something greater than tranquillity.

We want to create a dynamic area of the brain, because the brain is the creator. Tranquillity alone cannot be the purpose of the brain. Of course, when you are tense, you have to tranquillize the brain, but yoga aims at something more than tranquillity. The brain is the seat of the higher faculties and these faculties have not been discovered yet. There are hundreds and thousands of circuits in the brain which are not in use.

Only one tenth of the brain is functioning. The supersonic and ultrasonic circuits in the brain are dormant. When you direct more energy towards the brain, you are only trying to awaken those dormant, potential areas. If you build a city of about two or three thousand houses, together with industrial plants, you may provide all kinds of wiring,

telephones and various electrical installations, but nothing can function until the city is connected to the powerhouse. In the same way, the dormant unexplored and potential areas of the brain have to be connected to the seat of power for creation of a greater dynamism in the brain.

How important is it to keep the body still in meditation?

Siddhasana, padmasana and vajrasana are considered to be the best of the asanas. With the spinal cord upright and straight, sit down quietly and begin the practice. The first thing which you have to learn in the art of meditation is to create total immobility of the body. Before you can learn to control the restless mind, you must first learn to control the body. It is through will that you say to yourself, "I render the body immobile for a period of time," perhaps ten minutes.

When you create this immobility in the body, the physical organs, particularly the heart, are relaxed. The coronary pressures are released. Consumption of oxygen goes down, the rate of respiration falls, fluctuating blood pressure is stabilized and slowly the alpha rhythms of the brain come into full play. The behaviour of the brain is reflected in the brainwave patterns: alpha, beta, theta and delta. When alpha rhythms manifest in the brain, you find there is tranquillity and the conditions are more conducive to meditation.

What does one use as an object of concentration?

The eyes can be fixed on a point in the body. Your gaze can be fixed with your eyes open or closed. There are two important centres suggested by yoga. One is situated in between the two eyebrows and the other at the tip of the nose. You can choose one of the two, then fix your mind and gaze on that point. When you have fixed your gaze, you should try to visualize an object upon which to concentrate.

The objects of concentration are twofold: either you use a sound or a form. If you want to concentrate on a sound, you choose a mantra for yourself, such as *Om*, *Kleem*, *Krim* or *Hrim*. That is the sound, *shabda* or word. If you want to

visualize the form, you can use any object of your choice, but the best, in my opinion, is a tiny star or bindu. As you see a star at night in the sky, you must try to see that point of light at your eyebrow centre and concentrate on it.

Now meditation begins. You are fixed in siddhasana, the spinal cord is upright and straight, the eyes are closed, the body is immobile and your mind is fixed on one point. You are trying to visualize a star.

The moment the concentration becomes deeper, there is an explosion. This is the most important point I will make. There is an explosion – not a physical explosion, but an explosion of distractions in the mind. The mind will at once detach itself from the star, the bindu, and start wandering over and over so many topics of the past, present and future.

Here we face a problem. What are we going to do? Should we try to draw our minds back to the point of concentration or should we flow with the distractions of the mind? My advice is to continue your concentration, but do not suppress the explosions. Let it happen. Every kind of thought, desire, experience, sad or pleasant memory: let it come. Do not be sorry for this, or worry about it, because the first purpose of concentration is to cleanse your mind.

Throughout our life we have been having thousands of experiences, pleasant and otherwise. All those experiences have remained in our storehouse for decades. Man, as they say, has lived like a garbage can. You cannot even imagine how an experience transforms itself into an impression. Each and every explosive experience is stored in the deeper personality of every man, not only pertaining to this incarnation, but to previous ones as well, not only the experiences of your life but of your friends' lives as well.

These experiences remain in the human mind in molecular form. They are known as *karma* or *samskara*. As long as these samskaras remain in the mind, they are going to influence your destiny and your day-to-day life. Therefore, in dhyana yoga the first process is to give a release to these karmas and samskaras. This is how meditation is practiced.

As you go deep into meditation, you transcend the area of distractions, until you come across the area of visions. These are also an expression of your deeper experiences in this life and previous lives as well. They should be allowed to reveal and express themselves.

How can we face life and live it?

Day by day, when we practise meditation, we are trying to make a way to our inner life. This inner life is the nucleus of our existence. The external life is not the nucleus; it is only the manifestation. In the world today, we have everything for living, experiencing and enjoying, but we do not have a healthy mind. We do not have a free mind, a mind with illumination and knowledge. We have been born at a time when the external culture is developed but the participant in that culture has an undeveloped mind. That is the main reason why people are suffering.

If you honestly and impartially analyze your life, all that you have done and are capable of doing, you will come to the conclusion that the sufferings you have been experiencing are due to an undeveloped mind. Development of the mind is the most important thing if you are to have a better association with life. If you want to get the most out of life, either sensual or spiritual, an illumined mind is necessary.

It is for this purpose, in our times, that we must learn how to withdraw the mind and bring it closer to the inner self, to the deeper recesses of life. A few minutes of meditation each day will give you sufficient strength not only to face life, but also to live it fully. This is precisely the reason why the most developed modern nations have accepted yoga, in spite of their different religious traditions.

Swamiji, on the surface it seems that I have everything, but still I do not feel happy inside?

When you have plenty of freedom to live, total freedom to enjoy, all the social securities, a clean home to live in and

an organized government to take care of you, why should you be unhappy? Why should you suffer from high blood pressure and heart attacks? You say, "It is because I am too materialistic, too sensually oriented." No, it is because you have not brought your mind from sensual parlance to the spiritual centre. As long as your baby is out on the road, he is insecure. The moment he comes inside the house he is secure.

The secret is just one. Where is your mind? What is the status of your mind? Where have you placed the mind? Have you placed your mind within the area of the spiritual zone? If not, the sufferings are endless. It is not possible for man to live life fully, unless he knows where to place the mind, and how to bring the mind within the spiritual zone.

Wealth, knowledge, family, society, nation, all these things put together give a good picture of a nation, but not necessarily a good picture of an individual. After all, the nation has to be for individuals or the individual has to be for the nation. Which is more important? The individual is more important. We cannot sacrifice the individual. We are not sacrificial goats. Therefore, in our country, dharma, kama, artha and moksha, all four have to be equally developed, not merely artha and kama, not merely the material side but also the yogic and spiritual side of life.

Unfortunately, we lack this balance. We hope that we do not repeat the mistakes we have made in the past. Dr Sigmund Freud once said, "As the modern advancements come into the home, as the society becomes more sophisticated and industrialized, the dimension of disease will change!" There will be no more typhoid, smallpox, cholera or malaria. However, there will be schizophrenia, epilepsy, diabetes, hypertension, cancer, and so on. These are the diseases of modern civilization which we have to face in the future, but if we continue with yoga practices and traditions, we shall be able to create a balance between materialism and spirituality, between the outer and inner man. This is absolutely necessary.

Can you please tell us what is happening overseas regarding the teaching of yoga?

In Switzerland in the rehabilitation centres for alcoholics and drug addicts, which have been operating for forty-five to fifty years with minimal success, they have introduced yogasanas, pranayama and yoga nidra. They have obtained fantastic results.

In that country there are large sanatoriums where the rich people who are heavy alcoholics are asked by their doctors to go and break the habit, because they are suffering from dilation of the heart, or cirrhosis of the liver. The doctors advise them to give up alcohol, so they go to the clinics for some time and then come back. They go with one bottle and return with two. There is no change because the mind has not changed, the consciousness has not evolved, the physical body has not been purified. The nervous system remains under strain. However, after introducing the system of yoga nidra, it has been found that people are greatly relieved of their habits.

In France, the Ministry of Education has introduced yogasanas into secondary schools. For many years they have been keeping diaries and reports of how the children are responding. Parents and teachers have been interviewed and questioned on their progress. They positively agree that the children improved in their attitudes, relationships and performance, after they began practising yogasanas in their school program.

Is yoga being taught in prisons?

In Maharashtra, in the Central Jail of Thane, with the help of the Jail Reforms Commission, we introduced yogasanas to prisoners and inmates. They were interviewed and said that they had found peace emotionally, physically, mentally and sexually. After all, those who live in the jails, although they have gone against society, are human beings like us. They also have problems.

The Commission has trained about two hundred prisoners as yoga teachers. Most of these inmates are long-term

prisoners charged with major crimes. Some have committed six murders. Now they are being transferred to different jails as teachers of yoga. I had a personal discussion with the D.I.G. of Jails who said there is no doubt from his experience that even if yoga does not change a criminal into a good citizen, at least it can give him peace of mind in the jail where he has no ideals to live by. They are a pitiable lot of prisoners. People living in society can never imagine their pains and tragedies, suffocation and suppression. If I were put into jail, I would need to occupy myself with yoga.

In your free home where you keep your own lock and key, and where there is no policeman to see you, how unhappy you are. What are your experiences? You feel like a prisoner without being in a prison. You have emotional disturbances, nervous breakdown, insecurity, fear, psychosis and schizophrenia. You have hunger and hunger and hunger.

Those people in jails come back as more determined criminals, because they have to take revenge. Two prisoners I talked to in jail became yoga teachers, saying that after practising yoga for six months, they no longer felt they were prisoners. One said, "I don't feel that I have been jailed for my whole lifetime. I have forgotten it. I don't care. Now I am a happy man." Isn't this a great change in life? If yoga can at least give peace and better understanding of the situation in life, it has done a great job.

In the United States, yoga wings in every jail have been created. The wings are called Yoga House. In one Yoga House there was a large hall and a library where one would find not only the Vedas, the Puranas and the *Bhagavad Gita*, but also books by Swami Chinmayananda, Swami Ramdas and many others. There are books on yoga by every author. I have seen the library register in one such Yoga House and every inmate there has read those books in preference to comics. Those prisoners have found by personal experience that this type of reading gives them everlasting peace, contentment and satisfaction. What does a man really need? What is he searching for? He is searching for contentment, he is searching for peace.

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Group Dynamics and Yoga

Darbangha House, Ranchi, 8 January 1979

I have always been a student of human sciences and from time to time I have been in touch with some of the eminent men in these fields. Since establishing the Bihar School of Yoga in Munger, I have been in touch with the experiments that are being conducted all over the world in relation to the effects of yoga on human personality. In the last forty years the people in western countries have faced tremendous problems which have ultimately led them to the great task of investigating a science that they had been hearing about for a long time. Some medical men and other scientists started conducting experiments to ascertain the effects of the practices of yoga on the mind, body, human behaviour and psychological performance.

Will the practice of yoga not only affect the individual who is practising, but also others and the environment?

During the last twelve years I have collected enough material to show that yoga is not only confined to the individual, to his personal and spiritual evolution, but it has something to contribute towards the development of a universal mental atmosphere. We have always thought that an individual is a separate unit and that the mind is an offshoot of the brain, that the brain thinks and there is nothing beyond matter. In

yoga, however, we definitely know that mind is more than matter. The individual mind is a part of a great homogenous and universal mind.

Just as the light burning here is not a separate unit by itself, but is a part of a great complex which is directly or indirectly connected with other lights here and elsewhere. Similarly, this human mind which we all possess is a part of the whole. Since we are a part of the whole, we can influence the whole, but because we have isolated and misinterpreted our mind and personality, we have been suffering from the experience of separation.

Where there is isolation and separation, there cannot be a team or a collective spirit. That has been the problem in the modern western countries. Civilization has undergone a great change. People of different types have come together in order to fulfil a task for society and for the nation. While coming together, however, they bring their individual nature, temperament, cultural status and professional status. Scientific experiments have proved that yoga can help man to transcend the limitations of the individual mind and to direct his mind towards homogeneity and universality.

How can one develop a homogeneous mind?

The mind is not an expression of the brain. The brain is physical matter and the mind can exist without the brain. In yoga the mind is known as *chitta*. Chitta is not only a thinking instrument, a feeling instrument, a planning instrument, but it is the homogenous consciousness of which an individual is comprised. Chitta can be expanded beyond the borders of the physical body. Experiments have proved beyond all expectations that an individual can expand the consciousness, the possibilities and the capacities of his mind. When the mind is individualized, it becomes egocentric. When you make the mind free from egocentricity, it becomes universal and homogeneous.

In this respect, the powers of the mind can be enlarged by the practices of concentration and meditation. In the

language of science the practices of concentration and meditation influence the brainwave patterns. At different levels of meditation and concentration, the brainwaves have been seen to undergo a great transformation, which is reflected in one's behaviour, outlook and reactions. That is how society and its institutions are affected by the influence of the mind and brain.

The practices of concentration enlarge the mental capacities and the mind becomes capable of connecting itself with various individuals. The mind is capable of inducing one thought in different minds at the same time. A stronger, more capable mind, which has been put into focus, can make people feel, think and act in one direction. This is how institutions, monasteries and ashrams are conducted throughout the world. Tens and thousands of people can be brought under the influence of one homogeneous concept and one universal contact.

The external life and the internal life coexist. In relation to this, there are two striking definitions of yoga. Firstly, yoga is efficiency in one's own actions and duties. Secondly, yoga is balance of mind in relation to one's own duty. Therefore, when we talk about yoga, we are discussing a science which not only maintains the physical body but also the great potential within this physical structure.

The sannyasins and yogis in the past, after leaving their homes, went to the Himalayas where they practised yoga to enlarge their consciousness. Then they descended with this increased capacity to give guidance to the people in society. In this country, people now need yoga more than ever, not because we are a religious people, not because we are the one nation which is pledged to a sattwic system of society and living, but also because we have to show the rest of the world that external life and internal life can go hand in hand.

Western nations have been facing great difficulties in adjusting their individual and social lives. They have tried every possible method from medical science to psychology, from acupuncture to Zen, to correct this situation. Ultimately,

however, they have come to the conclusion that unless the individual mind is transformed, nothing can be achieved in their personal and social life.

We can talk about thousands of people coming together and working for a cause; it is an attractive idea and a tempting slogan. We can think, "Well, we work to build up the nation," but is this the spirit that is speaking or is this only a slogan? I think it is only a slogan. The real spirit can never come forth unless an expansion of consciousness takes place.

A mother can never feel the sufferings of her child unless her consciousness is expanded and united with that of the child. Two people who love each other can never feel the happiness and the sufferings of one another on the spiritual plane unless there is union. This union is not an intellectual affair, it is not hypothetical. This union is the actual fusion of the two. Hundreds of temperaments can be fused in the same manner just as there is fusion of different electrical lines in one pole. The mind moves through the atmosphere, through space. It has a plane of movement and it can travel through space just as sound waves or objects can.

Will yoga in the workplace increase group unity?

In an institution, in an industry and in society, hundreds of people come together to work. Do they do so just because of persuasion? Do they do it just because it gives them a slogan or makes them more conscious of their duty? Or is it possible that it gives them an opportunity to expand their consciousness beyond the frontiers of their own mind and body, so that a union and a homogeneity takes place between the two or three thousand people who are working in that institution?

This spiritual union occurs spontaneously even without the individual knowing the details and the importance of group performance. In my opinion, an organization is nothing but a total fusion of spiritual possibility. If this spiritual evolution of the mind is realized by society

and its organizations, definitely the performance and achievement not only of today's generation, but also of generations to come, will be more spontaneous. There will be less fluctuation, less compulsion and less philosophical interpretation of the meaning of union.

Yoga means union. If thousands of people all over the world can be influenced by one thought, one philosophy, we will have a different society altogether. I have been visualizing in my mind, ever since 1956, that yoga is emerging as a very powerful way of life, which is going to influence and alter the events of the world. I am not talking in the sense of a political power to come but in the sense of the descent of a new form of consciousness. It is said in the mantra of the *Rig Veda*:

Let us go together, speak together, think together,
deliberate together. Let our mantra, our institutions,
our deliberations, all be the same.

Swamiji, are you reviving the ashram system?

We are forever talking about a community where people live, work, enjoy and suffer together, but we have not as yet formulated the means for creating such a community. For centuries and centuries we have always tried to brainwash the intellect of man. That is why today we know what we would like, but we cannot accomplish it practically, because all of us are intellectually divorced. We have not been tackling ourselves emotionally and spiritually. Intellectually I know everything and I know that you too know everything, but is it possible to feel that on an emotional plane? In order to develop such a society, we have to work on spiritual and emotional planes.

All over the world I have been experimenting on certain pilot projects on the basis of our ancient ashram systems, which have unfortunately undergone a period of decadence. We have communities in which hundreds of boys and girls are working. They work with spirit. We have printing presses,

agricultural lands, dairy farms, classes in yoga, libraries – and many more things are going to be added gradually.

We find it is necessary that these boys and girls are developed mentally to a particular point of homogeneity. Sometimes I found that one of the members of the community was out of the group homogeneity, he had difficulties with the community and the community had difficulty with him. We came up with a simple solution. In the morning when we begin to work, the people from the community join their minds together for twenty minutes, either by mantra chanting or by the practice of asanas or meditation. We find that those communities work better in every way.

I have a big band of sannyasins and most of them are young. Quite a few joined me at the age of four, five and six, but most of them joined me at the age of eighteen or nineteen. These young boys and girls have kept their promises. They have remembered the promise, the words they uttered at the time of dedication and at the time of sannyasa. Their dedication has not been only intellectual. I tell them that even if they are absolutely dedicated to me and to yoga, they will not be able to do anything unless they spend sometime everyday in the practice of dhyana yoga. All of them are expected to practise dhyana yoga for the expansion of their consciousness and for the fusion of the different minds of the community into one mesh. In this way, in an organization of hundreds of sannyasins, we work as one mind. The creation of one mind is possible through the practice of dhyana yoga, not by slogans or intellectual brainwashing.

In the context of our present society where affairs are becoming more and more complex, where we face problems in our personal, family and professional lives, it is necessary for everybody to have one set of yoga practices suitable for one's body and mind. The purpose of those practices is to expand our consciousness to become part of the whole institution. Then thousands of people belonging to an

organization will be unified by one common thread. When this universality and homogeneity comes, the mantra of the *Rig Veda* will become a truth. This is the truth of living, working, achieving, suffering and enjoying together.

Can yoga become the soul of the nation and replace religion?

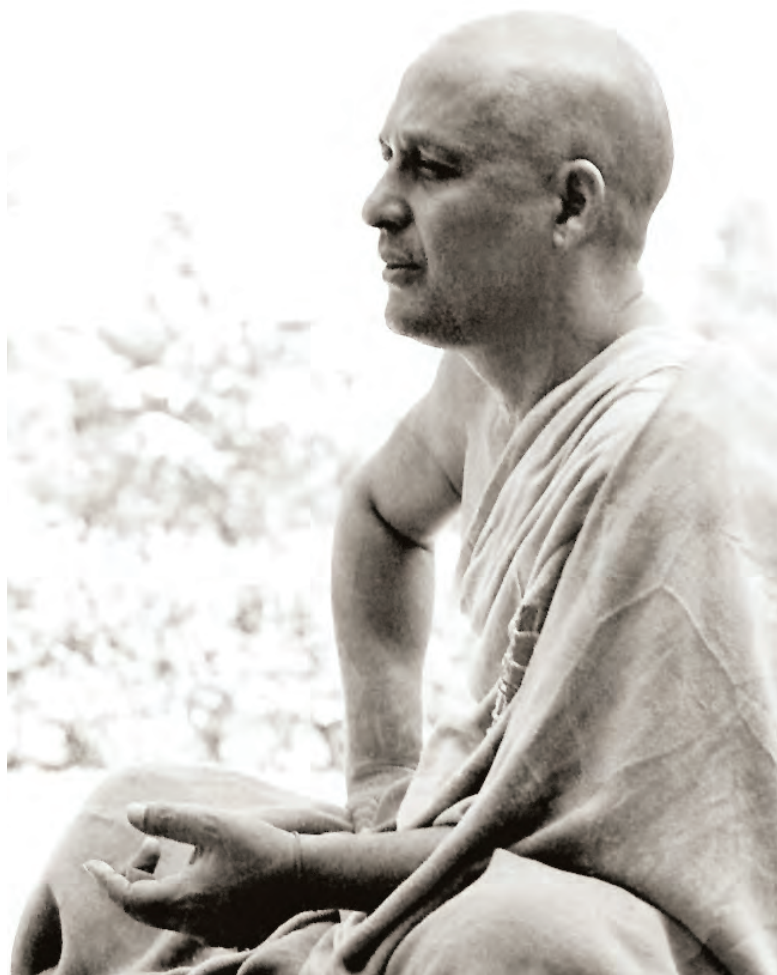
Yoga needs a teacher or guide. In the beginning yoga needs a special place as well. Your house is a nice place to practise yoga, but it is not the right place to learn yoga. A place is required where you can learn properly and that is called an ashram. A teacher is required for the transformation of the human personality, evolution of the human mind and betterment of your individual circumstances. More important than that, you must know theories and ideas of yoga.

Unfortunately, we people of this nation know little about yoga, even the more sattwic and religious people have not learned yoga. In terms of religion, philosophy, customs and purpose, we are an incomparable people, but we have forgotten something important. We have forgotten the soul of our nation and the purpose of our existence for which our ancestors strived so earnestly.

That is yoga and we have completely forgotten it. We have forgotten that yoga is a therapy, a way of making peace and becoming free from tensions. Perhaps this does not matter, but we have forgotten the part which yoga can play in our national resurgence. We have forgotten that yoga can weave a new fabric into our lives. Yoga can give a new personality to the world. In the world, at this moment, there are many jagat gurus, not in spiritual lines but in technology.

Today the thinking people of the world, the social thinkers, philosophers, are looking towards yoga. Thousands of boys and girls are looking to yoga. The churches have started looking to yoga. They know it is the absolute true vision of reality in relation to life flow. For centuries our ancestors have fulfilled the task. Now, it is up to us. This is possible if all of us can see just one thing: yoga can expand

the individual mind to bring about a fusion, a union, a merger of millions and millions of circuits together into one. This is how yoga thinks of fulfilling the stupendous task that is before us. The system of yoga which I teach is dedicated to this particular ideal.



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The Science of Self-Healing

Kasturba Hospital, Bhopal, 27 February 1979

This is not the first time that I am addressing the members of the Indian Medical Association. If you go deeply into the science of yoga, you will find that it has a lot to contribute to help mankind overcome its history of suffering. When yoga was discovered in this country thousands of years ago, one of the purposes was to help man get rid of physical, mental and spiritual ailments. However, for a certain period this science became obscured and was only interpreted as a science of mysticism. The thinking people lost interest in yoga.

In 1956, when I was moving all over India, Afghanistan, Burma, Ceylon and Nepal, as a mendicant, I came across many people and I taught them a few practices of yoga. At this time it was revealed to me that there was a great potential in yoga. When I completed my life as a mendicant in 1963, I thought of setting up a small institution in Bihar, in order to formulate a system of yoga which could be given to all mankind. At the same time I kept in contact with many research scholars and scientists in India as well as abroad. I encouraged them to conduct research and find out everything about the yogic practices.

Are they just physical exercises meant for training the body? Are they just breathing exercises in order to take in more oxygen? Or are these practices scientific, influencing

the deeper levels of the body, the nerves, endocrines and brain? In this connection a lot of research work was done outside of India at first, because unfortunately most of us had and still have an allergy towards yoga. For centuries we have been led to believe that yoga is a path of renunciation. In order to correct this view I had to travel all over the world, meeting doctors and scientists. Discussions were held regarding different practices of asana, pranayama, mudras, bandhas, the system of yoga nidra, meditation and concentration.

Today we have come to the conclusion that the practice of yogasanas is not just physical exercise as we thought in the past. Pranayama is not just a breathing exercise, and meditation is not just closing your eyes and thinking about your religion or your God. It is something much more than that. The practice of hatha yoga is an essential part of the purification of the body and raja yoga consists of the practices of concentration and meditation. Raja yoga combined with hatha yoga is a complete science of self-healing.

Can you please talk to us about the yoga research being carried out around the world?

It used to be that dhyana yoga was considered to be a spiritual practice meant for those people who wanted to know God. Recent observations, however, have shown that during meditation the brainwaves undergo a fantastic change. Meditation has a direct influence on the heart rate and blood pressure. At the University of Barcelona two research experiments were conducted simultaneously. One was on the effect of sound waves and the other was on the practice of yoga nidra.

What happens when the sound of *Om* is produced? Does it only produce a religious effect on the mind or is it a process of hypnosis? When you produce the sound of *Om*, a definite, concrete change takes place in the brain. When the sound *Om* was chanted by more than fifty people at different

times, they found fluctuations in the brainwaves with *O* and *M* and *Om*. When the sound *O* was chanted, it produced an intensity of alpha waves, when the sound *M* was chanted it produced alpha waves changing into theta.

If the brainwaves alternate between alpha and theta, what will be the reaction on the thought process, anxiety, the heart, blood pressure and the nervous system? This was one research project that was conducted and it has brought a lot of light to those of us who teach yoga. Whenever a yoga session is begun, whether it is asana or pranayama, the first thing that the student is taught is the chanting of *Om*. Therefore, you can understand that we are not teaching you something religious. Yoga is definitely not a religion.

When you begin yoga there must be total tranquillity in the entire structure of the body. The agitations in the brain, coronary system, respiratory system, excretory system, and glandular system must be brought to a point of quietude. At the same time, the normal activities of the body should be maintained. Therefore, yoga begins with the chanting of *Om* whether you are tackling the mind or body.

Research was also conducted on yoga nidra which is a system of dynamic relaxation. It is not a process of self-hypnosis. It is not even what you would call deep sleep. Yoga nidra creates a balance throughout the body by means of cultivating total awareness. Total awareness is an expression of the brain. It is also an activity created in the physical body. Through the practice of yoga nidra we have been able to help thousands of people with hypertension, insomnia, psychosis, and other problems.

In Poland more than fifteen years ago, a team of doctors decided to do some research on the effects of sirshasana on the human body. Sirshasana is not an acrobatic feat. One morning in 1943 when I came to the ashram of Swami Sivananda in Rishikesh, I saw the private secretary to the Raja of Tehrigarhwal standing on his head on the bank of the Ganga. Later I asked him what he was doing. He told me that he had had some heart complaint for many years, but

after the practice of sirshasana for a year or two, he became free of that illness.

A team of Polish doctors started this research on sirshasana. For six months they exposed hundreds of people to scientific observation. Ultimately, they found that there is no practice in yoga which can match sirshasana. There is no practice which has such a tremendous all-round effect on the systems of the body including the endocrine glands. When that report was published in Poland, I had it translated into English and sent it to the Journal of the Indian Medical Association in 1968. If you open your files you will see that article is printed there.

Swamiji, what are the best practices for the treatment of diseases?

The combination of a few asanas, pranayamas and shatkarmas helps in the treatment of many diseases. In diabetes the practice of paschimottanasana and shankhaprakshalana is useful. In asthma it is shashankasana and kunjla kriya. The practice of pranayama is also helpful. There are eleven pranayamas and we can just teach one for different diseases. For asthma and diabetes the practice of *bhastrika*, rapid, forceful breathing, is used.

If a person is suffering from high anxiety, we need to teach *surya bheda pranayama*. Breathe in through the right nostril which is surya nadi, retain the breath until the body perspires, and breathe out through surya nadi. This practice can be safely taught to those who are suffering from the effects of high anxiety.

Bhastrika pranayama is taught to the people who are suffering from what we call hysteria. There are many girls who suffer from this. For hysteria and psychosis, you don't have to teach anything else except bhastrika breathing: 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, 70, 80, 90, 100 times. Take her into a room and let her practise it. Afterwards let her do whatever she likes: let her throw off her sari, let her cry and scream and howl. You will find that in half an hour she will be alright.

We have tried the same thing on people suffering from hallucinations and intense fears. There are people who cannot go into the bathroom at night, although they know the room well. There are people who cannot go into a lift. There are people who cannot even peep through the balcony. That is a disease. If these diseases are left untreated, then, of course, you will have headache, insomnia, colitis, and all sorts of things coming out of the deeper mental condition. If you know people who cannot bear certain things, just ask them to practise one pranayama, surya bheda.

If there is insomnia, one should practise *ujjayi pranayama*, deep, sonorous breathing, like the purring of a cat. Practise it fifteen to twenty times with the tongue folded back under the upper palate. Any time you are facing difficulty, whenever you have tension and you feel your blood pressure is rising, just practise sheetali or sheetkari. They are simple to do, just breathe in through the mouth and out through the nose.

During pranayama you must also practise bandha. When you retain the breath inside, you should do *moolabandha*, contraction of the perineum. *Ashwini mudra*, contracting the rectum, which is a type of moolabandha. It is a preliminary practice. *Ashwini* means 'horse', and this practice resembles the way a horse contracts its anal sphincter after evacuating its bowels. Ashwini mudra is beneficial for piles. Moolabandha removes dullness and depression. It is one of the practices which is important for psychosomatic diseases. In the treatment of seminal disorders, of impotency as well as frigidity, it is *uddiyana bandha*, the abdominal lock, which is taught.

Do you see yoga as a universal science?

I have dedicated myself to the science of yoga and I always feel that India has lost her child somewhere. For thousands of years this child lived in our land, but recently we found that this child has been born and brought up in the West. When I went there, I found this lost child and now I am

bringing it back to you, because yoga is your child. Of course, it cannot remain confined to Hinduism or to India, because it is a science and science cannot be limited to any country, culture, religion or time. There is no Hindu botany, there is no Hindu physics, there is no Hindu anatomy, because science is universal. In the same way, yoga is a science and it is universal.

Many scientists are doing research on yoga and they will let us know what happens when each asana is done. When you are practising bhujangasana, what happens? Are you creating tension or are you releasing the tension in the back muscles? When you do sarvangasana or vipareeta karani mudra, is it harmful for the blood pressure or not? When you are practising paschimottanasana, what is the pressure on the intestines and what happens to the uterus? What is the effect of paschimottanasana on prolapse? What is the position of the different organs in the body during the practice of different asanas? These are important questions and I hope that we will be able to tell you more about them in five to ten years.

I know that the amount of money which is set aside for yoga research is not sufficient. We need ten times more. Research is not a small job. It cannot be done with one million rupees or even with ten million. Recently the Government of India gave us five lakh rupees to do research on the effects of yogasana on coronary diseases. We needed much more than that but it was not possible to get it from the government.

The researcher was Dr Srinivas from Patna, who is now retired. He also gave a lot of time and energy free of cost. He had his own clerks, assistants and staff. Patna Medical College gave us the facility of electrocardiogram, electroencephalogram, and also referred heart patients to Dr Srinivas. Our swamis used to go there and teach asanas. We maintained records for one thousand patients. Most of them are doing very well today. One of them was the son-in-law of Dr Dukhan Ram, a great doctor of Bihar; he was suffering from angina, but today he is alive and living a good life.

Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to remind you of your own potentialities. You are Hanuman and I am Jambhawan.

How long can sirshasana be practised for?

I do not suggest to anyone to practise sirshasana for one hour. My instructions are three minutes maximum. However, at the same time I am a great devotee of sirshasana. Those people who are suffering from high blood pressure should not practise sirshasana straight away. Before practising sirshasana you have to prepare the body by undergoing a course of preliminary yogasana. Once you have prepared the body through the proper asanas and pranayamas, sirshasana can be practised for up to three minutes. While practising sirshasana, at the end of the practice, you will find your nose being blocked for a period of time, and then it suddenly becomes free, released again. Sirshasana can be done by everybody, provided they have undergone a thorough preliminary course.

What type of diet should be taken along with yoga?

Diet varies for different people, just as you have different types of diets for different types of diseases. In yoga we do not speak against non-vegetarian diet or alcohol. In the beginning we used to, but then we went to the western countries and there we found people who live on non-veg food and at the same time they are practising asana and pranayama and doing very well. In yoga we recommend food restrictions according to the illness of the person. If someone is suffering from diabetes, asthma or high blood pressure, we offer practically the same dietary regimen as medical science gives. As far as diet is concerned, yoga has the same system and the same principles as medical science.

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Yoga Therapy

Gandhi Medical College, Bhopal, 28 February 1979

In 1964, the Bihar School of Yoga was established in order to propagate the science of yoga to modern man. At that time we definitely knew that yoga would be accepted by the great people of this world and much work has been done in this field since 1964. In the beginning our institution had very limited resources and there were not many workers. Gradually, however, over a period of time, we built up the entire mission and today we are able to produce tangible results and definite conclusions. We are in touch with many yoga research programs being conducted in India as well as abroad. People in this modern civilization have discovered that the way to peace and good health lies hidden in the science of yoga.

For hundreds of years the science of yoga has been misunderstood as a religion and abused as a system of magic. Today, however, the thinking people who have eyes to see and are able to understand the secrets of yoga with an open mind, have come to the conclusion that the science of yoga has a definite, clear and indisputable solution for the difficulties of man. The science of yoga covers a great range of human problems. It not only solves the problems of spiritual life, it can also help to ease the problems of our day-to-day illnesses. The science of yogasanas, pranayama, mudras and bandhas, including hatha yoga shatkarmas, has

brought to us the knowledge that diseases can be relieved by the practice of yoga.

Could you tell us about the yoga research that is being done worldwide?

In many countries scientific and medical research is now being conducted into various yogic practices. In Poland, Prof J. Aleksandrowicz, T. Pasek and Prof W. Romanowski have conducted research into the influence of sirshasana and other yogic practices on the human organism. In the USA, Elmer and Alice Green are doing fantastic research on the nature of the mind and the influence of meditation on the brain. In Japan, Dr Hiroshi Motoyama has even devised techniques for investigating the reaction of the nervous system and the brain during awakening of kundalini.

In Bihar, under the auspices of the Patna Medical College Hospital with the assistance of the Government of India, Dr Srinivas has already completed research into the effects of yogasanas on coronary diseases. In the University of Barcelona doctors and psychologists have produced extraordinary results from their research into the effects of *yoga nidra*, psychic sleep, on the human body. They have also conducted another research in discovering the influence of sound waves on the brain. A lot of work is being done in France on children of higher secondary school age. The Education Department has already published a report compiled by their inspectors, outlining the changes found in the children after one year of training in yogic practices.

Some months ago, in our ashram in Orissa, we held a practical seminar on diabetes for forty days. The course was inspected by Dr N.C. Panda of Burla Medical College Hospital, assisted by other doctor friends. Twenty-five diabetics of all ages, from all groups, were taught the system of yoga and the results were encouraging. Besides this, research is continuing at the Indian Institute of Medical Sciences, the Yoga Institute in Santa Cruz, as well as under the direction of Dr Datey. Research is also being done at

the Yoga Institute in Lonavala and the College of Yoga in Tirupathy.

So far the results are filled with a great message and I request you to ponder over this for a while with an open mind. All of you doctors are the high priests of our civilization. If you can understand yoga properly, in a scientific way, there is no reason why yoga cannot become an educational faculty for solving the physical, mental and spiritual problems of mankind.

Where does disease in the body originate?

All over the world people are living in a state of terror, fright, anxiety, passion, tension, insecurity, uncertainty, suspicion, and so on. These states influence man's physiological structure and cause most of the diseases that we suffer from today. In this context yoga comes to us as a great panacea. When we practise yoga, the changes in the physical body are clear; they are earmarked. The behaviour of the heart, consumption of oxygen, rate of respiration, reactions of the nervous system, secretions of hormones, alteration of brainwaves, and all the systems of the physical body are influenced and undergo certain changes.

This has a beneficial effect on most disease states. However, first disease has to be defined properly and yoga has its own definition. Disease manifests in the body, but it does not originate in the body. Disease originates with the state of imbalance. There may be disharmony between the nervous systems or an imbalance in the hormonal secretions or in the digestive processes. As such, we define disease in a subtle manner and we treat it according to its nature.

We do not treat diabetes as a digestive disorder. We know that it is a deficiency in insulin, there is no doubt about it. We also know that the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems are controlled by higher centres. When these centres fail to activate the nervous system properly, a deficiency of hormones in a particular area results. When we treat a diabetic patient, we do not

treat him for a deficiency of insulin. We know it is stress and strain that is responsible.

When we treat a mental patient, suffering from psychosis, neurosis or a nervous breakdown, we take him as a personality, a human being, an individual who can think and feel. We take him deeper into his own mind through the practices of concentration and meditation, bringing him to the root of his illness. If a person is suffering from high anxiety, we do not prescribe practices to induce an immediate state of tranquillity. Rather, we try to explode his personality, to express what remains dormant in the back of his mind. This is possible with the practice of concentration, such as mantra japa which is part of yoga. As a scientific principle, mantra is a powerful instrument. Through the practice of mantra, we try to explode the deeper phases of the consciousness. When the inner states of mind are exposed, one comes face to face with the thoughts, distractions, passions and repressions deep within.

The physical body is influenced by the human mind. It is the sentiments, emotions, feelings, objectives, passions, fears, anxieties and worries in the mind which create physiological changes in the body. The adrenal, thyroid and pituitary secretions have a natural flow and order. A thought can and does influence the workings of our physical body. Fear, psychosis or anxiety influence the endocrine glands and change the mode of the brain waves.

Has much research been done on the practice of yoga nidra?

Through the practices of yoga nidra, pranayama and chanting of mantra, we have been able to alter and harmonize the brainwave patterns. At the University of Barcelona they have exposed people to medical tests and investigations while the mantra *Om* was being chanted. The sound was recorded by sophisticated instruments and they found that when the *O* was being intoned, alpha brainwaves were predominant and when *M* was intoned, the pattern changed into theta waves.

How do these waves relate to different physiological conditions? If someone is suffering from hypertension, sit him down quietly in an easy chair. Let him close his eyes and chant *Om* for a short time. After fifteen to twenty minutes, when you take his blood pressure, you will be surprised to see that *Om* has certainly done the job.

In the same manner, research is being conducted into yoga nidra. This great science was lost completely, and now we have adapted and reintroduced it to modern man. Yoga nidra is an important practice. Medical investigations have clearly shown that it is not hypnosis but an entirely different practice.

Yoga nidra is a practice where you are allowed to relax but not to sleep. Sleep is not relaxation; relaxation can definitely occur in an awakened state. Lie down in the supine position and follow the awareness through the different parts of the body. As a result, a state of relaxation arises and the brain undergoes a corresponding change. During the practice of yoga nidra we have seen delta waves appear a few times, especially if the subject is tired. Sometimes theta waves appear also, but alpha waves are usually predominant.

Dr K.K. Datey from the Medical Research Centre, Bombay Hospital, taught shavasana, a short technique of yoga nidra, to one hundred subjects suffering from hypertension, men and women belonging to different age groups and professions. Half an hour of shavasana, known technically as yoga nidra, helped give permanent relief to these people. He found that only a few cases could not be managed in this way, and these were difficult cases, probably purely psychological.

What is the relationship between prana and mind?

The whole body is a composition of prana and mind. Prana is responsible for action and motion in life. The mind is responsible for thinking and feeling. Together, mind and prana fill this living structure, penetrating it through and through. The mind and prana are the two great forces in our physical system. If they are not in balance, a corresponding

imbalance is created in our mental and physical behaviour. The science of hatha yoga is based on these twin forces. Pranas can be balanced by the practice of asanas and pranayamas. The mental force is balanced by the practice of concentration and meditation.

In yoga it is said that there are 72,000 *nadis* or channels in the body through which the flow of prana and consciousness moves. Out of these, ten are considered to be the major ones. Out of these ten major channels, three are the most important. In yoga we call them *ida*, *pingala* and *sushumna*. *Ida* represents mental force, *pingala* represents vital force and *sushumna* represents spiritual force.

The individual is a combination of prana, mind and self. Certainly there comes a time in life, and not necessarily when you reach fifty-five, when you become aware, when you begin to realize that the body is not your only existence. The mind controls the body, and the *atman* or spirit controls the mind. When you become a master of the mind, you become a master of the body. If you are a slave to the mind, the body is full of disease. Once you become master of the self or spirit, you become the master of the body and mind.

Can you please briefly explain the practices of hatha yoga?

The practices of yoga are all aimed towards self-mastery. In raja yoga it is the mind which is important. In hatha yoga it is the physical body which is important. In hatha yoga we have the six processes of purification which are as follows:

Neti – the nasal kriya, in which warm saline water is passed from one nostril to another, or a catheter is passed through the nostril into the mouth. This practice is used for migraine, sinusitis, eye problems, sore throat, epilepsy and other disorders of the head.

Dhauti – washing the digestive system. There are several methods. In *kunjla kriya* or *vaman dhauti*, we drink salty water and then vomit it out. In *vastra dhauti* we swallow a thin strip of cloth about five feet long. It is not difficult, and we have been teaching it to asthmatic patients with great success.

Basti – sucking water in through the anus and then expelling it. This was traditionally practised while bathing in the river. It is used for the alleviation of piles, fistula and diseases of the rectum.

Trataka – gazing at a fixed point. This practice develops concentration and helps improve the eyesight.

Nauli – abdominal roll. This exercise stimulates different parts of the intestines and has immediate effects on the sexual debilities of man, which are most important in family life. It also maintains the health of the kidneys and bladder.

Kapalbhati – rapid respiration with the emphasis on exhalation. The purpose of this practice is to purify the frontal region of the brain and to revitalize and rest the mind. After five minutes of kapalbhati you will find that your mind is clear without any confusion. It is especially useful when you are studying for an examination.

Could you talk about practices for the mind?

After the practice of these hatha yoga techniques, you should begin asanas. After asanas, start pranayama and when you are sufficiently accomplished in these, begin meditation. *Dhyana* or meditation is an important part of yoga. It has a powerful effect on the human body and mind. Meditation is not only a psychological or spiritual practice, it is an all-round practice for everyone, with or without a religious background. The research that has been carried out on the influence and effects of meditation on the brain have revealed great changes in the brainwaves, the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems, and the entire personality.

Meditation is the most important practice for all mental and spiritual progress. Any time of the day, or at fixed times in the morning and evening, you can practise meditation for ten minutes. During these ten minutes you are not going to spend; you are going to invest.

First of all, fix your posture. Keep your spinal cord upright and straight. Close your eyes and fix them at the nosetip. That is essential. Keep the body still. Total

immobility must be achieved for a period of ten minutes only, not more than that. The whole body should not move. It must become steady like a statue. Next, become aware of your natural spontaneous breathing process. Do not try to breathe in and out. Do not make any effort to breathe. You breathe all the time, but now you should become aware that you are breathing in and out. Become a witness of the spontaneous breathing process. That is all, nothing else. Follow the breath for a full ten minutes. At the end of this time, come out. You can keep an alarm clock beside you if you like.

Practise this day in and day out. If possible you can expose yourself to medical tests before, during and after the practice. If there is computerized polygraph testing available, every thing can be tested simultaneously. After one month, if you undergo practical medical and psychological tests, they will show a change, but this is not the only proof. Your family members as well as the colleagues in your professional life will notice the change.

What are the broader effects of yoga?

Yoga is a science of therapy, a science of self-improvement and a way of discipline. Besides all this, however, yoga is a culture and every nation must have a culture. The culture is the backbone of a nation. Countries with political cultures have failed. Nations with a military culture have been destroyed. Races which had absolute power have disappeared from the face of the earth, leaving no traces behind them. However, a country with a culture based on yoga has eternal existence. It can survive through the vicissitudes of life, the accidents of history and the ravages of time.

You are the people who have survived through the accidents of history, because yoga has been your culture. In the coming times, yoga is going to emerge as a mighty world culture; yoga is going to direct the events of world history, and you have a definite role to play in this. It is up to you to accept this great science with love, with admiration, with hope and with sincerity.

37

Become a True Soldier

Gyan Mandir Military Centre, Sagar, 3 March 1979

Today, in this battle arena, one soldier is addressing another. You are a soldier and so am I. There are two kinds of wars which man must fight; one is waged on the battlefield of life and the other is fought within. The first is waged against external enemies and the second against internal foes. Military men are trained for the outer battle, while I train people for the inner battle. If we are not adequately prepared to face our external enemies, they will take advantage of our weaknesses and we will lose our independence. We are all aware of this. Similarly, if we are unable to control and master our internal enemies, they are bound to make us their servant and bring about imbalance and disharmony.

How can we conquer the enemy within?

In every part of the world, mankind is in a state of suffering. Every individual feels imprisoned within himself, defeated, dumbfounded, oppressed and bewildered. He wants to liberate himself from his limitations, but he cannot. He has lost the fight even before he faces the din and roar of the battlefield. The science of yoga frees man from his self-defeat. It is a highly developed science of defence, containing a wide range of weapons which are limitless in their scope and application.

Until man is able to liberate himself from his inner shackles, he will never be able to breathe the air of real freedom. Our biggest enemy is our own limitations. In our ancient literature these limitations were referred to as evil forces, devils and demons. By purifying ourselves through yoga, we can become like the general who controls and directs his own forces.

We can command our willpower to overcome our limitations. We have certain inbuilt strengths of endurance, stability, poise, concentration and self-discipline. They are like the commanders of an army. When we know how to manipulate these inner strengths, we can mobilize and gear them into achieving our desired objectives. In essence this is man's true victory over himself. To fight the extraneous forces, we must first develop the ability to conquer within.

Swamiji, what are your views on discipline?

Discipline is the path of yoga and the backbone of the army. Discipline is of two kinds: organizational and personal. Personal discipline is essential for spiritual progress, in the same way as organizational discipline is necessary for the progress of society and the nation. The country which has a disciplined army has no fears. Similarly, the person who has disciplined his senses is guaranteed success. How can one reach his destination when the horses of his chariot have no reins and the driver is restless? An alert driver who is clear about his destiny and is able to command and steer his senses is bound to attain his goal.

The real goal lies within yourself. What I have mentioned to you is the path which leads there. This inner life is more real than the outer life which is transitory, empirical, subject to time, space and objectivity. One who has understood and experienced the inner life can face the outer life with equanimity and ease. To enable us to experience the inner life without cutting off the outer life, our ancestors have developed the practices of yoga. By regular practice of yoga

we can achieve and gain control over our body and mind. It is simple and clear.

The path of yoga has to be understood and incorporated into our life. A few asanas, pranayamas and meditation techniques to develop concentration of the mind form the daily program. Asanas are not merely gymnastic exercises or body-building techniques. Pranayama is not breathing exercise, and meditation is not 'going out'. *Asana* means a posture in which you can remain steady and comfortable in body and mind. Asana and pranayama are important preparation for concentration and meditation.

How can we increase mental strength?

Our mental power increases when we develop concentration. A piece of paper will not burn simply by holding it up to the sun. However, when the rays of the sun converge in a convex lens, the intensity of heat at the focal point enables the paper to catch alight. Similarly, when our mental energies are not channelled in a proper direction, they quickly become dissipated and weaken the mind. A wavering, unsteady, restless mind is prone to all types of hallucinations, phobias and complexes.

A wavering mind is a sick mind. When we fix the mind on an inner point, like a flame or a bindu, we are actually trying to control the oscillations and fluctuations. We have to fix the mind on this inner point so that the consciousness revolves around it. After considerable practice of meditation, the mind becomes concentrated and stabilized at the given point. When concentration is achieved, mental energies are conserved. There is no tension or dissipation, and peace and inner strength are gained.

When the mind is free of distractions, the higher intuitive faculties are revealed and begin to guide the individual. Confidence increases, imaginary fears vanish, and one is able to face the realities of life. This is yoga. Yoga makes the mind strong, enabling it to endure pain and unhappiness. After regular practice of yoga, equilibrium

and vitality become the normal state of mind. With stability of mind, a man is able to radiate strength and confidence. When the mind is dissipated, it becomes weak, thus hindering its progress.

Efficacy of the mind is as essential as efficacy of the body. Exercise and drill, which all soldiers no doubt do, are good for the body but this is not enough. A strong body with a weak mind is no use. True strength lies in the mind. Only with the strength of mind are you able to achieve something worthwhile in your life. In order to attain mental strength and stability, keep aside ten minutes for meditation every morning. Decide where to fix your mind. If you want to fix it on a candle flame, just be aware of that and nothing else. When the mind is concentrated and one-pointed, even for a second, one undergoes a wonderful experience.

What can we do to tame the mind?

In meditation we discipline our mental thoughts, just as the scientist has disciplined the forces of nature. Your mind is a force, emotion is a force and memory is a force. When you feel happy or unhappy, that is also a condition of energy. The mind, therefore, is not a devil or a sinner. In the science of meditation we have to understand a few basic things and change some of our basic beliefs. How will we define the mind? Is the mind a thinking machine or is there more to it than that? The ultimate definition I have concluded is that the mind is energy.

Some people have been able to discipline this energy, but most have not. The mind is such a powerful force in man. Those who have tamed this mind have tamed the worlds. They have become great statesmen, prophets, artists and scientists. They performed miracles of the mind. Those who have been feeling unhappy in life, depressed, frustrated, pessimistic, full of conflicts within themselves, have not been able to master the mind. Therefore, we have to find out a way to harness the energies of the mind.

A great man in any field is not a product of destiny. He is not an accident or a combination of astrological or planetary conditions. A great man, who is able to handle the mind, is able to handle the world. This was realized by the rishis in India thousands of years ago.

Meditation must be practised in such a way that it transforms the quality of the mind. When you change the quality of the mind, you change the quality of actions. When you change the quality of actions, you change the quality of experience. The mind is capable of expressing itself in many ways, so much so that if the mind is held under control, it can give you mastery over events and circumstances. This is what we are trying to explain.

I don't believe in any particular sect or in preaching my own tradition, but I know that yoga is a great interdisciplinary science. By following the path of yoga, one day you will become a true soldier. You will defeat your inner enemies and achieve real freedom. You are not liberated now, because you are not your own master. You get easily swayed by emotions and passions, anger and worries. You are not able to endure pain and sorrow, and you become easily frustrated by difficulties. Neither are you able to rule your thoughts nor command your actions. You are enslaved by your mind. You will have to reverse this situation and attain mastery over it. Only then will you become true soldiers.



38

Patanjali's Raja Yoga

Tata Auditorium, Bombay, 7 March 1979

Let us remember the great Rishi Patanjali and by remembering him let us also remember the purpose for which we have incarnated. Patanjali conducted tremendous research throughout his life and finally uncovered a great secret which was the discovery of consciousness or *chitta*, as it is known in Sanskrit. All the practices of yoga advocated by Patanjali, which are termed as raja yoga or ashtanga yoga, are aimed at taming this great power in every individual.

What is the basis of raja yoga?

The raja yoga system of Patanjali is based on the Samkhya philosophy which has its roots in tantra, the concept of two eternal realities moving parallel to each other. This is not a hypothetical postulate; it refers to the real presence of duality in nature known as purusha and prakriti or Shiva and Shakti. *Purusha* represents the consciousness, *atman* or reality that is dormant in all existence, not merely the mental consciousness. *Prakriti* represents the material form or matter.

When purusha and prakriti interact, they are responsible for creation. Every miracle in this cosmos, every manifestation within and without is nothing but the interplay between purusha and prakriti. A thought in the mind is an

interaction between these two great cosmic forces present in every individual. In the realm of manifestation, it is prakriti which is really the instrumental cause. Therefore, in yoga we consider prakriti first and purusha second.

All the practices of yoga advocated by Patanjali, termed as *ashtanga yoga*, the yoga of eight limbs, are aimed at controlling prakriti. Prakriti governs the five *karmendryas*, the sense organs responsible for action: mouth, anus, genitals, hands and feet; and the five *jnanendryas*, the sense organs responsible for knowledge: tongue, ears, eyes, nose and skin. Prakriti also governs the different aspects of knowledge: *manas* or mind, *buddhi* or intellect, *chitta* or consciousness and memory, and *ahamkara* the personality or ego.

Are different sadhanas advised to deal with the fluctuations of the gunas?

Prakriti also operates on the physical and mental plane of each individual through the forces of the three *gunas* or qualities. The three gunas are termed as sattwa, rajas and tamas. These terms are used in a cosmic or philosophical sense rather than in a moralistic sense. They are, in fact, fantastic processes or expressions of nature, manifesting at different levels and functioning in different densities.

In *tamas* evolution is very slow, almost static. Actions tend to be automatic and at deeper levels the movements are nearly imperceptible. In *rajas*, the dynamic condition, evolution is very fast and things grow at a greater rate. *Sattwa* is the balanced state. The mind operates through the medium of the three gunas during meditation and during other yoga practices as well as in normal day-to-day activities.

In raja yoga, sadhana is designed in a way which allows for individual differences. For example, if we are tamasic by nature, if our mind is captured in the grip of tamoguna, the practices of hatha yoga, pranayama and yogasanas are prescribed. If a person whose consciousness is moving slowly in the tamasic state is asked to practise advanced meditation, he is going to have horrible experiences. He is definitely not

going to have what we call sweet enlightenment. If a person who is predominantly rajasic is taught advanced meditation techniques, he is also not going to benefit from them because he is too active. His mind is always moving and does not stay at one point for one moment.

What are the eight limbs of raja yoga according to Patanjali?

According to the predominance of the gunas, the sadhana has been advised by Patanjali in his *Yoga Sutras*. The whole process of sadhana has been divided and classified into eight stages or limbs known as:

1. *Yama* – Social code
2. *Niyama* – Personal code
3. *Asana* – Posture
4. *Pranayama* – Breath control
5. *Pratyahara* – Sense withdrawal
6. *Dharana* – Concentration
7. *Dhyana* – Meditation
8. *Samadhi* – Superconsciousness.

The first five stages are the exoteric or *bahiranga*, the external practices of yoga which progressively prepare the body and mind for the last three stages known as the esoteric or *antaranga*, the internal practices.

By raja yoga we mean those elements of yoga which are common to all yogic systems or which form the substratum of all yogic practices. Raja yoga is aimed at revealing the great power within each individual through successive stages of sadhana. Many people think that asana and pranayama are unnecessary for moksha because they are physical and gross in nature. However, let me tell you what I heard from Swami Sivananda regarding this point. As long as one is living in the body, as long as there is identification with the body, one must practise asana and pranayama. This is necessary to ward off disease and promote health, thus enabling one to progress on the spiritual path. An aspirant, who wants to experience the higher realm of consciousness

in all its pristine glory, is instructed to follow the whole course of yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, and so on. The whole program of ashtanga yoga describes the way for the attainment of a great stage of life from which we can perform as more powerful actors.

Patanjali tells us that there are two things which are most important in yoga sadhana. The first is *abhyasa* or repeated practice. Do not be discouraged if you cannot attain the right point in meditation. The second is *vairagya* or detachment at least while practising your sadhana. From this comes a capacity for controlling or halting the functions of the mind. When abhyasa and vairagya are coupled within an individual, they give rise to clarity of mind.

Could you please talk about consciousness and the mind?

Most people beginning to tread the spiritual path regard the mind as the aim of their sadhana, but unfortunately they are not able to analyze or interpret the word 'mind' correctly. Most of us who are engaged in spiritual practices of any type and dimension regard visions, thoughts or fluctuations of the thought patterns as the mind. According to Patanjali, however, that which is mistaken for the mind is simply a *vritti*, a pattern, ripple or modification. It is not the actual consciousness. An emotion is not the definition of consciousness, nor is a memory of the past or an anxiety about the future. All these feelings which we have been experiencing during our sadhana or at any other time of our life are not chitta, consciousness or mind, they are the vritis or modifications of the mind.

Yoga means control over the patterns and modes of consciousness, but not over the consciousness itself. Whether it is the practice of dhyana yoga or even the experience of sabija, nirbija, savikalpa or nirvikalpa samadhi, it is not the consciousness or the mind which we are withdrawing. It is the modifications, patterns and structures of consciousness which are suppressed, blocked, withdrawn or annihilated.

The consciousness is not withdrawn in meditation or in samadhi because consciousness is an abstract force. It is the basis for the experience of the individual in relation to time and space. The homogeneity of awareness and knowledge and the relationship with the world of diverse names and forms is based on what we call consciousness.

This consciousness has two different areas of manifestation. When it is in the form of movement and activity, it has a definite pattern and structure known as chitta, but when it is free from modification and any kind of pattern or structure, it is known as *chit*. Chit represents consciousness with a capital 'C', that which we call *atman*, and chitta represents consciousness with a small 'c' which we call mind. When consciousness or atman identifies itself with the world of names and forms, and is able to express itself in certain patterns and modifications, then it is chitta.

In yoga we follow this process in the reverse order by the practice of pratyahara, dharana, dhyana and samadhi. Many people define yoga as the union of *jivatma*, the individual soul with *paramatma*, the universal soul. In his *Yoga Sutras* (1:2), Patanjali, however, presents us with another definition of yoga: "To block the patterns of consciousness is yoga."

These patterns of consciousness are like ripples on the surface of water. They take a circular, concentric form. Even though they are still of the same substance as the rest of the water, they have temporarily assumed a different form. In the same way, consciousness or chit in an unmanifested form is *nirakara*, or pure energy, pure spirit. It has no name, no form and no dimension. However, when it is subjected to the constraints of a particular situation or item of knowledge, it assumes a particular form, just as ripples appear on the ocean surface.

In the practice of yoga we try to annihilate or withdraw these ripples from the surface of the mind, but we do not withdraw the mind itself. The mind exists on conscious, subconscious and unconscious levels, and also in the *sthula*, the gross dimension, *sukshma*, the subtle dimension as well

as other dimensions. We should never assume that yoga is trying to suppress the mindstuff itself. There is no such indication or process by which the mind can be suppressed, and at no point in meditation does withdrawal of the mind take place. Self-awareness functions throughout, and this self-awareness becomes more and more effulgent and luminous when the forms that we identify with the structure of consciousness, chit, are withdrawn. That is why it is said: "To block the patterns of consciousness is yoga."

These vrittis are to be withdrawn or stopped, but in order to stop them we have to know exactly what they are composed of. In Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras* it is said that the vrittis are fivefold: right knowledge or *pramana*, wrong knowledge or *viparyaya*, fancy, imagination or *vikalpa*, sleep or *nidra*, and memory or *smriti*. All these are the mental patterns which are infinite. During the practice of pratyahara, dharana and dhyana, whatever experiences you come across are nothing but the manifestation of the knowledge acquired by you – the mind facing itself.

How can the mind be purified?

During the practice of sense withdrawal and concentration, you have to work out all the perceptions and experiences in the realm of *vichara*, reflection, as well as in the realm of *vikalpa*, imagination or visionary experience. If you are not prepared to exhaust the experiences amicably and with pleasure, you will face them in the subtler form of visionary experiences. This may give rise to pride as you will feel that you have had some spiritual experiences. However, these are not spiritual experiences but your own samskaras coming out. The totality of vritti or modifications of consciousness that sticks to you life after life takes considerable time to be discharged. It is not just a matter of two or three months only. It is impossible for this to happen in such a short time.

Spiritual development is a slow process of transformation. Chitta is the most fantastic stuff, the ultimate form of which is chit; just as nuclear energy is the ultimate form of

fissionable matter. During the process of transformation we must be prepared to face ourselves. Before reaching chit or atman, a lot of unpleasantness has to be worked through and a lot of effort made in spiritual life as well as in day-to-day life. This applies to everyone, whether householder or renunciate.

Chitta shuddi or purification of the mind is not necessarily a pleasant or sweet process, but it is definitely a beneficial process. Through purification the mind becomes effulgent, and with this purified mind you are able to perceive your true nature. In the *Bhagavad Gita* it says (3:38): “As fire is enveloped by smoke, as a mirror by dust, as an embryo by the womb, so is This covered by that.”

In Patanjali's yoga system the cleansing of all the samskaras takes first priority. However, during the practice of pratyahara and dharana, when many samskaras come up from the depths of your consciousness, you resist them and push them back down. Whenever a thought comes into your mind you say, “No,” and refuse to recognize it. Due to preconceived, fixed moralities and conditioning, you are unable to face your mind. You have developed your philosophy of puritanism which categorizes thoughts into good and bad. Thus, during the period of concentration, when a thought comes into your mind to commit a crime or a murder or something like that, at that point you might give up hope and think that your meditation is spoiled. However, it is necessary to see these thoughts also.

In chitta shuddhi the same type of process should occur which happens whenever you purify the body of its foul and dirty material. Naturally there is a horrible smell, but unpleasant as it is, it is necessary in the process of purifying the body. In the same manner, when the purification of consciousness or chitta is taking place, you have to face these foul experiences. If you are not prepared for them, forget raja yoga and all other yogas. No matter which yoga you practise, the toxic matter of life is going to come out. Thousands of patterns of experiences, unworked karmas,

suppressed emotions and everything else that is there, desirable and undesirable, necessary and unnecessary, horrible and wonderful.

The chitta is a storehouse of cosmic knowledge; it is a treasure trove, but you have also deposited your complexes, guilt, pride, pain and all your pathos there. When you look into it during the period of concentration and meditation, how can you expect to see something other than what is there? If the sun is behind a cloud when you try to look at it, you will have to face and accept the cloud because it is there. Similarly, in the *Ishavasya Upanishad* it says (verse 15):

The face of truth is covered by a golden lid. Oh Nourisher,
open that lid so that I, the practitioner of truth, may
behold You.

Will yoga speed up the evolutionary process?

By the practice of yoga we are trying to lift this lid in order to directly perceive the truth, our highest potential. Usually this process of self-discovery or evolution is predestined to come to a definite point of maturity within a period of maybe one million years, but it can be accelerated by a scientific method and thereby completed within a few hours. What is this evolutionary process by which one becomes full of knowledge within a certain period? How does this ignorant, incapable, rudimentary consciousness of man become enlightened?

In every being the consciousness is in a state of perpetual motion. Just as the body is always changing and never static, similarly the mind or the consciousness is evolving at every step of life. This evolution takes us from the point of *avidya*, which is ignorance of the higher self to the point of *vidya* or knowledge of the higher self. Between these two points of *avidya* and *vidya* there is a great chasm which I call the evolutionary gap. Every individual is subject to the laws of nature and accordingly undergoes this process of evolution both knowingly and unknowingly.

In the process of evolution when matter undergoes transformation, part of it is lost and the remainder manifests as something else. There are subtle elements which have to follow a process of disintegration. This happens with nuclear energy and with any manifestation of energy which is all that matter is. If you light a fire, what happens? You gain the fire, but at the same time you lose the fuel, wood, coal or petrol. A disintegration of the properties takes place.

What is the individual composed of? What are the components of your individuality through many incarnations? If you could reduce the total composition of your individuality to numbers, you might find that you are +1 today, -1 yesterday and +2 tomorrow. The samskaras which come with you and multiply of their own accord through a process of permutation and combination, creation and destruction, have been responsible for your existence. As you lose some, you gain others, and as you evolve, you leave a host of them behind. When you were a child you loved to play with dolls and toys. Do you love them in the same way today? There are many habits and patterns which you have completely lost.

The mind as matter, consciousness, *jivatma*, is mainly composed of perceptions, experiences, samskaras and knowledge. During this great period of evolution between avidya and vidya, the individual loses some of these perceptions and gains some. If you are able to quantify by any formula, by any yoga, by any method, this process of loss and gain, this process of disintegration, perhaps in a few years you may be able to arrive at fulfillment of evolution which is samadhi, *paravidya* or transcendental knowledge, *jnana* or wisdom, and *kaivalya* or supreme liberation.

What is expansion of Consciousness?

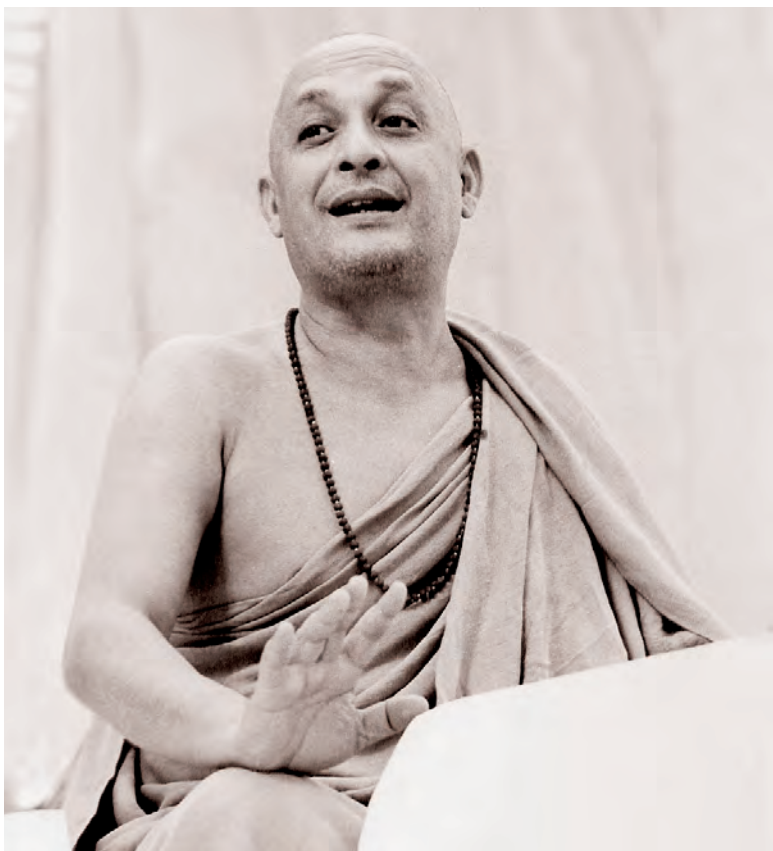
This is one of the most important subjects of discussion in Patanjali's raja yoga, which explains this subtle aspect of existence called the evolution of consciousness through the practice of yoga.

By the practice of yoga we are trying to speed up our evolution. We are not suppressing or killing the mind, rather we are trying to purify it, to empty it. Let us go further and consider matter which is composed of various elements. If you disintegrate the elements, what remains is pure energy. For the time being, consider the mind as matter. When you sit for concentration, the mind expresses itself in the form of thoughts, emotions and feelings. If you can consistently and systematically disintegrate any name, form or vision of the past, present or future, any knowledge, oscillation, *vikshepa* or imagination, *vikalpa*, by a process of negation, what remains? Pure energy or *shakti* which then becomes instrumental as well as a potential cause of intuitive manifestation in the life of a yogi or sadhaka.

Samadhi or kaivalya, the ultimate aim of yoga, is meant to give a total and creative expression to human life. Animals are guided by instinct. Human beings are additionally guided by intellect and emotions. However, a yogi who has attained higher consciousness is guided by a supermind, *nirmana chitta*. Comparatively speaking, an individual whose activities, decisions and creativity are guided by a greater manifestation of the self is more powerful, capable and efficient than an animal guided by instinct. Instinct is one expression of consciousness or mind; knowledge and emotions are also expressions. They are the tools for human beings for the fulfilment of the purpose of this incarnation.

If you give someone a pistol, he can shoot within a definite range. If you give him a rifle or shotgun with greater power, he can shoot at a much greater range. In the same manner, the higher mind is more powerful, capable, intuitive and highly creative than an ordinary mind which is subject to limitations and is not transcendental. The purpose of samadhi is to develop a level of consciousness in man from which he is able to view his life and effectively tackle his problems. From this level he is also able to understand the reason behind his existence and the purpose of his life.

Most people move within a confined boundary. At one end is pain and at the other pleasure. When there is the death of someone close it creates pain and agony in the mind. An achievement in the field of business or knowledge will give elation and happiness. This is natural, an automatic response of the mind. When the consciousness evolves beyond natural responses and behaviours, we are able to look at the affairs of life in a different way. Thus the purpose of *samadhi*, which is the ultimate aim of raja yoga, is to attain a greater power, a greater capacity in our life.



39

The Philosophy of Tantra

Tata Auditorium, Bombay, 8 March 1979

The science of yoga was born of a great philosophical system in the prehistoric period. Thousands of years have gone by and mankind has not been able to reconcile itself as to whether life in this world is conducive to spiritual progress. Every time we think of spiritual unfoldment and evolution, we have a quick flash in terms of renunciation of our associations with life. This has been continuing for centuries, not only in India but practically everywhere. It is not a mistaken concept, but definitely if spiritual unfoldment is man's destiny, life as a whole should be a way to that unfoldment, and every experience in life should be considered as a part and parcel of that way.

Every experience of joy and pain, pleasure and passion, should be a stepping stone in this eternal journey to infinite awareness. Why is it that for over three thousand years mankind has thought that for spiritual enfoldment one has to renounce involvements and associations with life? It was not so in the prehistoric vedic period when there was a great science which was known to the people of this country and to people all over the world. At that time, life in its entirety, from involvement with attachment to detachment, was an experience, a vision. This path was known as tantra.

Tantra is not a science of magic, exorcism or hypnotism. It is one of the most sublime philosophies ever to evolve from an enlightened mind. During this period of cultural and philosophical decadence throughout the world, which was preceded by political accidents and the ravages of time, this great science of tantra was greatly abused and a time came when people no longer knew anything sublime about this great science. Tantra became synonymous with witchcraft, involving sex and wine, and so on.

What is the purpose of life?

In this century, man has become disillusioned about his present environment and this disillusionment is growing day by day in spite of continuing propaganda. Disillusionment has given man a great question regarding the spiritual purpose of life. We know the worldly purpose of life and everyone is committed to that, but what of the spiritual purpose? If there is no spiritual purpose of life, the structure of religion is false. When religions are nothing but politically motivated philosophies, it is absolutely illogical to think that life has a purpose, but still there is a religion, a God and a philosophical system.

We have to be very logical. If there is a God, if there is a greater reality, if there is an infinite time and space, if matter is not the ultimate structure of creation or the ultimate composition of the cosmos, there should be a spiritual purpose for life which man has unfortunately forgotten.

The purpose of life is evolution and during the course of this evolution, matter has to be split into two. The gross matter pervading every speck of the cosmos and the matter which is dominating our every thought and emotion must be broken into two.

The structure of reality is dualistic, not non-dualistic. Two things constitute one process. Creation, projection, perception, procreation and evolution are processes involving two eternal forces in order to make one pattern. Even as electricity is a projection of two forces intertwined,

the positive and the negative, in the same manner the two great forces are working in absolute integration in the individual who is the microcosmic reality. These two forces are prana and consciousness. The vital force is known as *prana shakti* and the mental force is *manas shakti*. Every particle of matter is a composition of these two eternal and immortal realities.

What is the principles of Shiva and Shakti?

Matter is never intrinsically matter. Matter has within it some indefinable quality by which it is localized in time and space. If the potential inherent in matter is withdrawn by some process, matter will cease to exist. Nothing in this world can exist without an integrated action of two forces. The philosophical concept of tantra is that the microcosmos and the macrocosmos are an interaction of purusha and prakriti, and more directly Shiva and Shakti.

Although the principle of Shiva and Shakti has been explained in terms of male and female deities in order to facilitate better understanding, let me tell you that Shiva is a force and Shakti is a force, and these two eternal forces in combination and interaction with each other are responsible for the manifested cosmos and creation, for you and me. Let us not mistake Shiva to be a masculine god and Shakti to be a feminine god. In order to represent and explain the truth to the people, an example is needed. For that purpose, the concept of Shiva and Shakti has been put forward by mythology, but in tantra *Shiva* is understood as representing consciousness and *Shakti* as representing the energy aspect. What is consciousness and energy in the microcosmos is Shiva and Shakti in the macrocosmos.

What is the relationship between tantra and yoga?

If one is to transcend the consciousness of time and space, which are qualities of prakriti, one will have to separate these two from each other. If one has to transcend the expression of time and space, of name and form, of duality and

limitation, these two forces, purusha and prakriti, have to be separated from each other. In science, when the nucleus of an atom is split through a process of fission, what remains at the end of the process is pure energy. This is exactly the process which we follow.

The separation of these two elements is called tantra. This is the literal meaning of the word tantra: *tanoti* means 'expansion' and *trayati* means 'release'. *Tan* and *tra* equals *tantra*, comprising expansion and release, expanding the mind or consciousness and releasing or liberating the energy. Tantra is a philosophy in which the mind is expanded and the energy is released from the shackles of matter. In tantra we are taught the system of yoga. Yoga is the practical system and tantra is the philosophical system. Yoga gives the practice and tantra the explanation.

What are the elements of tantra?

Mantra is the first important element of tantra. By mantra we don't mean the name of a particular deity. *Mantra* is a combination of sounds or vibrations designed in such a way that by its practice the aspirant is able to transform the structure of his mind and thereby liberate his energy. Mantra is a very important item in tantra.

Many people know about mantra and practise it, but they think it is a religious practice. They have identified mantras with a particular religious system and with deities of that religion. This is why religion has been misunderstood throughout the centuries. We have not been able to define the spiritual symbolism, the tantric symbolism of the deities. In Sanskrit, in tantra, the word used is *deva*, not the word God. *Deva* means 'illumination', therefore, when we talk about mantra, we talk about a symbol which represents illumination.

This illumination is nothing but the illumination of our experience. In each and everybody, there are experiences taking place in the subtle body, in the occult and subliminal body. These experiences are in the form of consciousness, in the form of geometrical patterns which move in a circular

motion or in a triangular way. These experiences are only known when the inner mind is able to cast illumination or light on that experience. The inner body of every man is enveloped by a shroud of darkness. On account of darkness, which is known in our system as *avidya*, we are not able to fully experience things. Avidya does not allow us to see.

For example, if you are angry, you know you are angry. You feel you are angry but can you see it? Does it have a form? If you are worried, you know you are worried, you feel that you are worried, but can you see the worry? Is worry abstract, is it formless? If fear, anxiety, happiness have a form, have you ever seen it? Sometimes during a dream the fear is symbolized, the passions are formulated, the anxieties are materialized in forms. Every experience has a form and a dimension. It may not be objective or gross, but definitely every experience has some kind of density and some kind of existence.

In the same way radio or electromagnetic waves are not seen, because the mind is not subtle enough to perceive them. I can feel my emotion, but I cannot see it, why? I am not able to cast light on the experience because the mind is not enlightened. When the mind is enlightened, it can cast light on any particular experience. You can see your fears, your knowledge, your feelings, your passions. You can see everything as a form. You can see it in a human form, in a geometrical form, in many different forms. This is the concept of the *devata* in Hindu philosophy.

Therefore, the philosophy of tantra is not pantheistic just because it talks of gods and goddesses, and it should not be confused with monotheism or with pantheism. They are academic classifications and do not really matter in the case of an aspirant who is going deep into his own mind and his own self. You have to know that these two principles of purusha and prakriti have to be separated in order to liberate the great force, or *shakti*, and for the process of separation, in tantra you have the principles called mantra, yantra and mandala.

The entire scheme can be summarized by tantra, mantra, yantra and mandala. Mantra is a combination of sound vibrations. *Yantra* is the formulation of energy in certain geometrical patterns. *Mandalas* are able to cast the dissipated and rudimentary mental force into one single force.

In our age, when we are progressing with spiritual discoveries with a great desire for realization and liberation, let us remember that tantra is a system which declares that this life to which we are committed and which we have to go through, is part of spiritual life. It is not something removed from spiritual life. Nothing is rejected, and whoever we are, wherever we are, with our properties and propensities, whether they are *tamas*, *rajas* or *sattva*, we can start the spiritual pilgrimage, we can begin our spiritual evolution. In order to reach the highest point in spiritual life, you do not have to make a departure from your lifestyle.

The mantra you have should be made a tool for the splitting and liberating process. I have written three books on this. There are also good books written by Sir John Woodroffe and many others on the traditional system of tantra. In the ancient Hindu temples, the carvings which are not acceptable to society today represent the core of tantra. It is reality. You may not like it, you may not accept it, you may hate it, but it is reality. You may condemn it in the name of religion, but still it is reality. Reality transcends everything that man has made.

When can we begin to practise tantra?

You can begin to practise tantra here and now. You don't have to renounce your lifestyle. Whatever you are is your qualification. With this pattern of life, if you go on with your practices, there is no reason why you should not attain self-realization. Self-realization is not confined to a puritanistic philosophy or an orthodox religious life. One has to view life as a process in the ultimate evolution. All the philosophies, all the ways of life, which have been teaching us to change for the sake of realization, advocate

something which is impossible. Man cannot change unless an inner transformation takes place. Change without this transformation is hypocrisy; it is a stage show. This transformation of one's inner being can never happen just through the mind.

How can you change yourself through the mind – and who is changing? Transformation has to be effected on the matter of the structure. You cannot tackle matter unless you do so scientifically. How can you change matter? How do you change yourself? You can behave as I want you to, but you will not change. To change the intellect only is not change, to change the emotional patterns is not change. Transformation is a spontaneous expression of that great change that is happening in you. When matter becomes energy, that is transformation and that is change. When the "I" becomes spiritually divine, that is transformation and that is change.

That is where religions have failed in their promises. Millions of people, for thousands of years, have not cared for spiritual transformation. That is where the law has failed and the political orders have failed, because they want change without transformation. Transformation is a change in the basic structure of man. We have lived for forty or sixty years, but what am I within and what are you within? We are all shrouded in clouds of darkness inside, although we live an enlightened and cultured life outside. Well, this is not transformation.

What are the qualifications required for spiritual life?

Tantra says that we should be honest and true. You should not say that you have become a saint. I am not a saint, but that does not disqualify me from spiritual life. Just because I am not a saint and I am not morally acceptable to the religious and scriptural qualifications, does not disqualify me from tantra. I may be a saint or a rogue or a drunkard, and I may not even practise a religious way of life, but that does not disqualify me. If I have decided that I want to experience the great awakening in spiritual life, that is my qualification. That is the purpose of life.

Why is man here? Why is the cosmos existing? What is this fantastic drama for? Why has some foolish creator made all these follies? What is this macrocosmic and microcosmic blunder? Where is it going to lead us? I am sure of one point. For every man a day should come when he must know himself to be different from the matter of which he is now aware. You are aware of yourself, you are aware of your matter, your mind, your body, and so many things, but you are only aware of the gross matter.

The substratum of matter, the soul of matter is shakti, and that shakti has to be seen as different from matter. Matter holds shakti in it; they love each other so much. The realization of shakti is the subject of tantra. The liberation of shakti is the subject matter of books, and the acquisition of shakti is the passion of every man of today, yesterday and tomorrow. I do not have to tell you, you know it very well. Shakti is something which everybody is searching for. However, sometimes in this vain search for shakti, people strike and fall, stumbling against a wrong shakti, and they are in trouble. The main subject of tantra is shakti, therefore it is said:

Yah Devi sarvabhuteshu vishnumayeti shabdita

Buddhi rupena samsthita

Shraddha rupena samsthita

Tusti rupena samsthita

Matri rupena samsthita

Namastasyai namastasyai namastasyai namo namaha.

To the Devi who is present in every being, animate and inanimate, in the form of the Word maya, the Shakti, of Vishnu, the preserver, the sustainer, to the Devi who is present in all beings in the form of intelligence, in the form of reverence, beings in the form of contentment, in the form of motherliness, we bow down again and again.

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Meditation According to Raja Yoga

Tata Auditorium, Bombay, 9 March 1979

Is meditation a living experience?

Meditation is a living experience. Another word for living experience is *darshan*. Darshan means inner vision, but this vision is definitely different from a psychic experience. When one has this experience of darshan, the same depth of awareness as during the waking state is felt. Therefore, meditation is a living experience. The raja yoga of Sage Patanjali maintains this idea, that when the mind and its properties are controlled by incessant practice of yoga, there is manifestation of a higher state of awareness and this state is meditation.

Since we are involved in the practices of yoga, it will be necessary for us to know how we should proceed with meditation. Just closing the eyes and withdrawing the mind from the sensory experiences does not mean that we have achieved meditation. From all the experiences we have gathered, and the scriptures we have studied, we have learnt that the state of meditation is a dynamic state of awareness which not only influences the subjective and psychic experiences, it also influences the whole nature and the responses of the personality. The transformation of consciousness is an important process that follows meditation. It is also said that there are certain prerequisites

for meditation. Whether you practise meditation on a religious basis or purely on the basis of raja yoga, the important thing to be remembered is that meditation must have an object as an anchor in order for the consciousness to travel.

Swamiji, what do you recommend as an object for meditation?

There has always been a controversy about *saguna* and *nirguna* meditation, meditation on the form and the formless. Most people who believe that reality is formless have a serious objection to accepting an object for meditation. They say that if the supreme consciousness is formless, how can a form help us to achieve that experience? However, from all our experiences we have come to one conclusion, no matter what the nature of reality is, even if it is absolutely formless, in order to maintain steady spiritual progress and to be able to have a grip over all the transforming states of consciousness, meditation on a form, *saguna dhyana*, is necessary.

This is not a religious affirmation, as I do not belong to any sect. Philosophically speaking, I belong to the nirguna path, Advaita Vedanta, and yet I have always felt throughout my career of guiding spiritual aspirants, that an important item in dhyana yoga is concrete awareness of a concrete object or symbol. We should not confuse ourselves between the spiritual practice and the ultimate reality. We choose a concrete object, not because we believe that the experience in samadhi is a material experience, but in order to guide the mind through the recesses of consciousness.

When the consciousness passes from the external to the internal terrain there is absolute darkness, there are no supports whatsoever. There are no guidelines and practically no proof as to whether we are progressing or regressing. There is also no indication to show whether our consciousness is spiritually transforming itself or whether it is entering a state of *tamas* or inertia. As long as the object

is kept intact during the various stages of transformation, as long as you are able to visualize the object in the subconscious or the unconscious plane, you are on the right path. The moment the symbol vanishes, you are lost, which means that you have to come back again to mundane consciousness.

Can one practise meditation on light?

In Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras*, five symbols are mentioned, but he has also given us freedom of choice. First of all, you can practise meditation on the light which takes you beyond sorrow and evolves a blissful condition in you. This light can be visualized in *trikuti*, the space between the eyebrows. This light may also be visualized in *anahata chakra*, the heart centre. It can be experienced within and without. It is the symbol; it is the thought.

When you transcend name and form, time and space, and for a moment everything appears as if dead, it is that light that shines in the realm of consciousness which leads you through the transforming states of personality and consciousness. If it is not possible to visualize the light spontaneously by closing your eyes, the best thing is to place a light, or *deepak*, before you and practise *trataka* on it. Then close your eyes and try to visualize the same light within. This is one technique.

You can also take as an object for your meditation any of those saints or gurus who have transcended the realm of *maya*, who have risen above *karma* and the three *gunas*, who have attained a high quality of *dispassion*. These saints or gurus can also become the object of your *dhyana*. It is not my intention to emphasize that the ultimate reality is bound by form. However, I am emphasizing that it is very important for the mind to have something to grasp. When you meditate on one of the saints, you develop the effulgent personality of consciousness within yourself, which can also help you to attain the state of *dhyana* and *samadhi*.

Is it useful to practise pranayama before meditation?

Pranayama, which is the fourth step in raja yoga, can lead one to the state of dhyana directly. Pranayama appears to be a gross practice but it is not. When practised with the necessary preparation, it will bring about the state of pratyahara. It will create one-pointedness of mind and help to withdraw the mind totally and make one steady in dhyana yoga.

One of the most important pranayamas for meditation is known as *chaturtha pranayama*, where you must become aware of the ingoing breath and the outgoing breath separately in their natural speed and rhythm. After watching the natural rhythm of breath, you should make it a little deeper than natural. If the practitioner of dhyana yoga is able to combine the force of consciousness with the force of prana during these most natural movements of the breath for all the twenty-four hours, samadhi takes place by itself.

The great yogi Gorakhnath said that you must practise awareness of your breath with the mantra *Soham*. This mantra of the breath continues throughout the day and night, and when you become conscious of that, the inner awareness will express itself spontaneously. It will just explode. This is the most important of all the pranayama practices. It has been adopted by the Buddhist system of meditation and many others. In Iran it is practised by the Sufis. They say that the breath is the indicator, the torch bearer, that and the interplay of consciousness is moving up and down with the breath. Awareness and breath must be integrated and when these two move together rhythmically and you watch the movement quietly, it brings you to dhyana.

How important is it to awaken sushumna?

Dhyana is not a limited experience but a broad range of experience. It has localized stages which are planes of experience. Therefore, concentration on awareness of the movement of the breath is a powerful system. When you make your breath a little deeper than natural, when you prolong your breath, your consciousness is able to open sushumna.

When sushumna nadi wakes up, no matter when you have started your sadhana, distractions and wavering of the mind cease. We have been failing in our sadhana because we have always been wrestling with the mind. Somehow we are under the impression that we must conquer the mind, but this will never happen. The only way to get over the mind is to transcend it, not to fight it. You can spend your whole life fighting with the mind and when you are prepared to enter the grave, you will only be able to say, "Well, I couldn't conquer you this time, but I am coming back to try again."

Intelligent people have found another method, transcendence. How to transcend the mind? You cannot transcend the mind by the mind. The mind can only be transcended by a spiritual practice. Yogis have correctly said that you can do whatever you like in your sadhana, regardless of how the mind plays and behaves. What we are concerned with is how to awaken sushumna. Once the awakening takes place, it is an explosive experience. You suddenly find everything expanding, disappearing and reappearing. What was considered to be one of the most difficult missions of life, to control the mind, has just happened by itself. Within a moment the mind has been forgotten.

In yoga, the sadhaka is told not to have unnecessary conflict with the mind, which has a nature of oscillation, which is made up of the three gunas; rajas, tamas and sattwa. It is better to practise chaturtha pranayama and if the awakening of sushumna takes place, the aspirant experiences dhyana.

Do you recommend a particular posture for meditation?

The raja yoga of Patanjali does not restrict the sadhaka to these forms of meditation. It says that if you want to practise any other system of meditation, do it. However, in this context, you should remember that in India we have experimented on various systems of meditation, for example, concentration on the chakras or on a sound or a form. In nada yoga you produce a humming sound, which helps you to lose body consciousness and become liberated from the

mind. If bhastrika pranayama is practised systematically, it will help you in the art of meditation of any system.

Meditation is a spiritual affair but it is happening in the body and, therefore, it will influence the bodily process. When deep meditation takes place, alpha patterns arise in the brain and the blood pressure drops. When meditation becomes deeper, it influences the body's interior temperature and the digestive functions are not strong enough to enable one to eat anything or everything one might like. Various postures are suggested for meditation to help counteract this dropping of the body temperature.

One posture is *padmasana*, the lotus posture, which is difficult for those who are not used to it. The second is *siddhasana*, the accomplished pose. This asana presses the mooladhara and swadhisthana chakras which control blood pressure fluctuation. This is where many aspirants make a mistake. They think that meditation is a spiritual practice, a religious exercise; so it does not matter in which position they sit. Meditation is not a religious practice; it is more concerned with the spiritual transformation of body, mind and consciousness.

Meditation is a scientific process that is taking place in the body, so it will not be scientific to meditate in any posture you like. You can remember God in any posture, but meditation should be practised in vajrasana, padmasana, siddhasana or siddha yoni asana. Diet is another important factor to be considered. The more you meditate, the more simple your diet needs to be due to the changes in digestive secretions and body temperature. The place you choose for meditation is important, and during meditation practice you must be completely relaxed in every way.

There is no hard and fast rule about which system to practise for meditation. The Muslims, Hindus or Christians can practise their own system. When meditation is perfected, the awareness of the meditator, meditation and the object of meditation are withdrawn. There is a total merger of this trinity. At that point samadhi comes by itself; one does not have to do anything.

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Meditation: Our Priceless Heritage

Tata Auditorium, Bombay, 11 March 1979

This evening we are going to think about a system of life for ourselves, for society, the nation and the world at large. Yoga is not just one aspect of life. It is a system which covers the entire range of human personality. Yoga brings about the manifestation of the latent potentialities which are in every man, and by which one can overcome the limitations of life. This emancipation of the greater part of one's personality can be achieved by the practice of the science of yoga.

What is the gift of yoga?

A few decades ago we were taught that yoga was meant for people who had renounced life, but now the picture has entirely changed. We have come to understand that yoga can fulfil our needs. It can help us to resolve our conflicts in life and trigger the evolution of awareness. Man is shackled by limitations. There are certain limitations of one's personality which are defined by one's own mind. The mind which is free, which has attained a homogenous dimension of consciousness, is capable of accomplishing greatness in life.

Man is not just a flame in this body. He is much more than that. The nucleus of his personality is not only the *prana* or life force, it is not only the thoughts and emotions,

the nucleus of the human personality is awareness. This awareness should grow internally and externally, so that its growth brings us its reward – intuition. In this particular context, yoga becomes a valuable asset for mankind. All over the world, not only in India, people belonging to various religions have come to accept yoga and that is for just one reason: the practice of yoga develops the consciousness. By the development of consciousness, we grow in understanding, knowledge and spirit.

Therefore, when we talk of yoga, we talk of meditation. When I say meditation, I am not denying the other aspects of yoga like bhakti yoga, karma yoga and hatha yoga. Of course, we need them, but tonight I am going to devote my time exclusively to meditation or *dhyana yoga* which is something which our ancestors passed down to us and which is a valuable gift to humanity.

What is the process of meditation?

Just as the scientist explodes an atom by the process of fission, and disintegrates the material particle until ultimately only energy remains. Similarly, the inherent energy is brought out of the mind by the process of dhyana yoga. In one of his poems Saint Kabir has clearly indicated how this happens:

Listen Friend, on the topmost story of this building
there resides a pair. He who unties this pair has
broken his bonds.

This is exactly what happens in meditation. The mind is matter. The mind is not a thinking apparatus or a bundle of habits. The mind is a homogenous entity, an ocean of awareness. Emotion, thinking, memory, feeling, reasoning, which we identify as the mind, are not the total definition of mind. Mind is awareness.

We do not even know what the mind is. We know that we are thinking and therefore we consider this as the mind. Homogeneity of consciousness is the mind. In yoga philosophy we use the word *chitta*, which means awareness.

This mind is matter, it is composed of karma, power and potentiality, and within the fold of this mind is light. We have to withdraw the whole mind, the total, empirical, external awareness, and then what remains is shakti.

This shakti is perceived on two planes. One is the shakti that has been derived and liberated from matter, and is called *aparashakti*. In the *Bhagavad Gita* it is said, “I have two natures: One is *paraprakriti*, the transcendental nature, and the other is *aparaprakriti*, the lower nature, the physical nature.” This physical Shakti is a result of the liberation of energy from the fold of matter. In the same way, when we liberate energy from the chitta, it is called *atmashakti*, the ultimate essence of man.

It is because you have not been able to perceive or achieve this atmashakti that you are miserable. By following the process of *dhyana yoga*, concentration on a particular point, you are achieving a process of liberation. It is a process of fusion. When you sit down for meditation, each and every thought or emotion that arises in the mind is the form of the mind, and you are withdrawing it. There is a distinct definition of dhyana yoga. The raja yoga of Patanjali says withdraw the mind, concentrate the mind, then focus the whole awareness at just one point.

What is ajapa japa meditation?

According to the tantra shastras, Lord Shiva tells Parvati that there are millions of methods by which one can concentrate and liberate shakti. One of them is known as ajapa japa. It is a very old and easy method of meditation.

You make the breath the basis of your concentration. In one minute you breathe fifteen times, in one hour ninety times, and in twenty-four hours twenty-one thousand six hundred times. We breathe but we do not know we are breathing. If you follow the process of breathing for a moment, the breath becomes the basis of pratyahara.

Concentration on the breath can be practised in the nostrils, in the throat and windpipe or in the spinal column.

When we have mastered concentration on the breath, we should add another component to the practice which is known as mantra. The mantra can be *Om*, *Soham* or any mantra. This is how we proceed on the path of dhyana yoga.

The influence of the gunas

When we try to concentrate, the mind does not cooperate. The mind is composed of three gunas: sattwa, rajas and tamas. These are the constituents of the mind and, as such, we are all more or less sattwic, rajasic or tamasic. Those who are more rajasic, tamasic or sattwic by nature, will have different problems with their mind. Those who are tamasic become lazy and fall asleep when they concentrate. Those who are rajasic by nature are not able to concentrate. The moment they try to concentrate, the mind gallops like a horse. Those who are sattwic by nature are able to concentrate on the object fixed by them for some time, but then they get visions or psychic experiences.

We have to find out to which particular nature we belong. If we are tamasic by nature and try to concentrate, after a few minutes we will start slumbering. This happened to me about twenty-seven years ago. One evening I sat down to meditate in padmasana at about 6.30, and in the morning at 4.30 I woke up in padmasana. I was very happy. I thought that I had attained samadhi, but Swami Sivananda said that I had realized the total form of tamas.

Naturally everyone has some tamas. In case of predominantly tamasic people, the practice of meditation should be preceded by the practice of bhakti yoga and hatha yoga. Those who are predominantly rajasic by nature should not try to control the mind by force because they will fail. It will only create a split in their personality. It is a problem that will be faced by most of us. According to the *Bhagavad Gita* (6:26):

*Yato yato nishcharati manashchanchalamasthiram;
Tatastatato niyamyaitad aatmanyeva vasham nayet.*

From whatever cause the restless, unsteady mind wanders away, from that let him restrain it and bring it under the control of the Self alone.

However, that is not possible for most of us. We belong to a different age.

Today, if we try to suppress our minds we are going to become schizophrenic for we are creating a conflict in ourselves, we are creating mental chaos. That is the problem which many people have to face, but it can be overcome by patient and persevering practice.

Do not try to force or suppress the mind. Let it wander in and out if it wants to, but be aware that it is wandering away and bring it back to the practice again and again. In time it will grow weary of wandering and become more steady.



Dhyana Yoga – the Master Key

Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 15 March 1979

Gradually people are coming to realize that they are part of a higher evolution and not only born to live and die. When the supply of electricity is constant in our homes and the wiring is made of strong material, there is continual illumination. In the same way, we must learn to render the mind steady and develop inner harmony, through the practices of meditation and at all times, in the face of problems and conflicts in our social and personal life.

Yoga is an ageless science. Although at times different methods of teaching yoga to people have arisen, it has remained in essence, the same. From the primitive, uncivilized tribes to the modern age social systems, man has always needed yoga. Not because of the way he looks or talks or because of his social or political views, but because of how he feels, reacts, dreams and expresses himself.

Although modern man calls himself scientifically minded, and tries to understand everything, great and small, in the light of science, he has still not made any departure at all from his essentially rajasic and tamasic nature. Our primitive ancestors had anxieties, fears, worries, agonies, sorrows, guilt and psychosis, but they didn't know it. Modern man not only suffers from the same number of problems, but he also knows it, and it affects his total personality.

What is the main purpose of yoga?

Fifty years from now our children are going to remind us that we have created this body, our houses, society and the nation around us, from the mind. We have not been able to understand this mind for we have ignored it, believing that the body was first and last and that nothing existed beyond our physiological comprehension. Now, however, a light is dawning and we have come to understand through the modern way of analysis that this body, our society, laws and religions, are all influenced by the mind and our personality. What we are today is what our nation is, what our home is, and what our diseases are.

In order to change every sphere of our social, political, economic, physical, mental and spiritual existence, a reorientation is necessary for the being that has evolved within us. All forms of yoga: hatha yoga, raja yoga, bhakti yoga, karma yoga, jnana yoga, kundalini or laya yoga, have just one purpose in mind and that is to train the animal instincts in us, to rend them asunder and evolve a new personality.

The whole process of agony, living and suffering, either physically, mentally or emotionally, originates from within us and not from without. This body is only a field of expression where we play the game. More than ninety percent of the diseases that we know today are basically psychosomatic in nature. Headache, asthma, heart attack, peptic ulcer, constipation, blood pressure, diabetes, insomnia, sciatica and skin diseases, are only a few examples. Scientific diagnosis of these and many other diseases attributes the cause to mental maladjustment. The psychological disorders like psychosis, neurosis, irrational fears, and so on, are deeper in our nature.

Can you please explain the terms prana and chitta?

According to yoga this body is a combination of two important elements. One is the life-force known as *prana shakti*, and the other is the mental force known as *chitta shakti*.

We are a composition of prana and chitta. When these two forces within us are balanced, life goes on smoothly. Such people are called saints or liberated beings, for they have transcended the pains of life. However, when there is an imbalance between prana and chitta, diseases of a physical, mental, emotional and psychic nature manifest.

In tantra these two elements are known as Shiva and Shakti, in yoga as the two nadis, pingala and ida. These two nadis are situated within the framework of the spinal cord from its base at mooladhara chakra to the top atajna chakra. The word *nadi* comes from the Sanskrit root *nad*, to flow. It does not mean nerve or blood vessel as is commonly believed. The flow of these two nadis cannot be seen with the naked eye like a cable wire. It is imperceptible, yet it is definitely a reality, in the same way that we cannot see the flows of thought, passion, anger or love, nevertheless they exist.

This life-force and mental force permeate the whole body, not only the parts of the body which are perceptible, but every interior component and cell of the human body as well. When there is no prana, there is death. Without chitta there is no awareness. Consciousness and prana move within the body, but normally remain separate. When they do unite and are in perfect balance with each other at the top of the spinal cord, the mind undergoes a state of fission or separation and energy issues forth. There is an explosion of knowledge, a moment when we see everything as luminous.

How can one extend the dimension of prana and consciousness?

This mind is not just a bundle of habits or a collection of samskaras. It is not Satan or merely a psychological entity. The mind is consciousness, a substance with infinite potential at its depth. It is the totality of awareness, karma, emotion, thought, every action and reaction. Once we learn how to handle the mind through the practices of yoga, we will be able to handle ourselves like a master and not like a slave.

It is the mind that tells us what to do. It forces us to act sometimes even against our own wishes. The mind should not be suppressed, ignored or condemned, because chitta shakti is a great force in us which has to be tamed for evolution to continue. Cultural, historical, political or economic evolution is not the evolution of man. Until man is able to tame these two infinite, universal energies within this microcosmic unit, prana shakti and chitta shakti, there is no yoga and no evolution. We will continue to behave like animals in our physical form and our level of awareness both.

Evolution means movement. For our evolution to move any further, the pranas have to be balanced through hatha yoga, and chitta must be purified and balanced through raja yoga. Prana is a special force which we are born with and by which we come into individual existence. This life-force is a part of the universal prana, and the mind is a part of the universal chitta. We are controlled by the individual prana and chitta, but by the practices of yoga we can extend the area of control.

Just as in the administrative field we extend offices from one district to another, then from one province to the next, in the same way, we have to extend the area of activity of prana from the present gross level to a higher one. Prana is pure life-force. It is *Om*, smaller than an atom, but it can be extended out of the mind into greater levels of influence.

How can we prepare the body and mind for meditation?

The first thing to practise every morning is siddhasana, the best of asanas. Both men and women can practise it. Become steady in siddhasana, and then place your hands in either yoni mudra or chin mudra. Learn how to practise moola, uddiyana and jalandhara bandhas, and nasikagra and bhrumadhya drishti. Learn the correct way of practising pooraka, rechaka and kumbhaka, either from your guru or from an experienced teacher. Practise pranayama everyday for five to twenty minutes. This is the easiest and quickest way to awaken dhyana, but the preparation must be perfect.

The body must undergo a process of purification to eliminate the toxins. You must take care of your diet. This body is not a graveyard. You have to put living nourishment into it, not dead substances. If you are definite about dedicating yourself to the fulfilment of the greatest of tasks in life, which is dhyana yoga, you have to make some sacrifices.

If this practice creates any kind of physical difficulty for you, your preparations are not complete. In this case go back to the asanas. Practise sarvangasana, halasana, siddhasana, supta vajrasana, matsyasana, bhujangasana. These asanas are intended to create light impulses in the chakras. Some asanas can awaken certain chakras directly. It is not necessary for you to wait for higher practices. Sarvangasana will help you to awaken vishuddhi chakra. Sirshasana creates a light stirring in sahasrara. All these simple practices contribute to the eventual awakening. Do not think that yoga is a form of physical exercise. These postures are designed to create a union between Shiva and Shakti, between prana and apana, between prana and chitta. When this union is perfected, the state of dhyana arises.

Why is dhyana yoga so important to mankind?

The practice of dhyana yoga is of utmost importance, because it will become the basis of the future world cultures. It will become the spiritual light which philosophies and cultures of the past have failed to give us. Up to now, the socio-political creeds have only spoken of spiritual life in terms of Hinduism, Mohammedanism, Buddhism or Christianity. However, we have to learn to unite all these religions and that is why man is going to take shelter in yoga.

A spiritual revolution is taking place, not only in this land, but all over the world. The future culture, communities and religions will not be able to resist the influence of dhyana yoga. They will have to turn to it for guidance.

Now is the right time for you to accept dhyana yoga as part of your daily activities. It is easy to say that you have no

time or that when you sit for meditation, your mind escapes you; know that these are only excuses. Who are you trying to deceive? What happens when you go to the hospital for fifteen days? Where do you get the time from? When you pass sleepless nights worrying about your family problems, business problems, love problems – where do you get the time from?

If you don't have the time, borrow it. If you have to pay high interest, the benefits will amply pay it back. The practice of dhyana yoga will show you the way to the nucleus of your existence, to the centre of your personality. Yoga is an absolutely clear science. The questions and doubts that people have been asking throughout the ages, "Where am I coming from and where am I going?" will automatically be answered. I always try to use the term dhyana yoga, because the word meditation does not fully convey the meaning of dhyana yoga. For many years I have been trying to find the correct meaning of dhyana yoga in English, Spanish, German, French or any other language. Dhyana is not only Sanskrit. It is a universal word meaning total awareness. When you expand the possibilities of your knowledge, of your mind, this is known as dhyana. In Patanjali's raja yoga it is said that when an idea flows constantly without any interruption, without awareness of a second object, and stretches without any division or separation, it is called *dhyana*.

Swamiji, do you have a solution to stop the wandering mind?

When people begin to practise dhyana yoga, they always face the same difficulty. They try to concentrate on one point again and again, but the mind wanders away. Again they bring it back, but again it escapes. They go on like this, alternating between pleasant experiences and states of total unruliness, every day for many years, but they never achieve dhyana. This battle between you and yourself will last a lifetime. You are not fighting with the mind and the mind is

not fighting with you: remember, you are the mind and the mind is you. When you withdraw and struggle with the mind, you are only creating conflict within yourself.

You will never win the fight with your mind because its very nature is a composition of the three gunas, tamas, rajas and sattwa. When the state of tamas predominates, the mind is dull, inactive and tense. When rajas is predominant, the mental condition is scattered and dissipated. When sattwa is in command, the mind remains quiet and concentrated. The natural interplay of the three gunas exerts a great influence on the mind. If the mind loses one of these characteristics it is not able to function.

Yoga approaches the problem of concentration from a different viewpoint. The state of meditation is a culmination of the awakening of a third important nadi known as sushumna. Sushumna flows within the framework of the spinal cord from mooladhara chakra up to ajna. Just as ida nadi carries the force of chitta and pingala nadi carries the prana, so sushumna nadi carries the spiritual force which represents the atman. *Sushumna* is a powerful energy flow, a non-physical, absolutely transcendental, formless flow. It is the replica of cosmic existence, of a god-like state.

Whereas the flow of ida and pingala functions alternately, sushumna normally lies in a dormant state, often referred to as the eternal sleeping nadi. Once sushumna is awakened through the practices of yoga, you do not have to try to meditate. It becomes a spontaneous process. If you can awaken sushumna even for five minutes, you will have the experience of a lifetime.

How can one awaken sushumna?

The question is, how to awaken sushumna, not how to concentrate the mind, as no amount of effort or force can ever make the mind one-pointed. You can enter into dhyana, into a state of samadhi, through the practices of yoga by first awakening the sushumna nadi. Hatha yoga, raja yoga, karma and bhakti yoga, kriya yoga, laya yoga, kundalini yoga,

mantra and japa yoga, are directed to only one purpose – the awakening of this third great nadi.

Peace of mind, siddhis, psychic experiences, relief from blood pressure, diabetes, and so on, are all by-products of yoga. There is no better system of therapy than yoga, but this is not the primary purpose. There are some people who practise long breath retention or *kumbhaka* with moolabandha and uddiyana bandha. Others practise vajroli, sahajoli and amaroli, concentration on the third eye, austerities, kriya yoga, repetition of *Gayatri* mantra or *Om* hundreds of thousands of times, others take to LSD, ganja, heroin and indulge in many drugs in order to experience the absolute. They are only floundering in the darkness. They do not realize that the ultimate purpose of all these practices is spiritual awakening, and therefore, nothing happens.

You cannot transcend time and space or the laws of gravity and mind, unless sushumna, the great mother power in us, wakes up. In Hindu mythology sushumna is represented by Durga and Kali. They symbolize the formless force. When Kali wakes up, she is pictured standing naked on Shiva who is lying in perfect shavasana, completely helpless. Shiva represents Purusha or consciousness and Kali represents Prakriti or Shakti. She is thoroughly dynamic and when she wakes up, kundalini automatically arises from its slumber in mooladhara chakra.

Awakening sushumna is not easy, but I have given you a clue. You may have to practise different systems of yoga, higher and lower forms, learned from your guru or from various teachers. The raja yoga system of Patanjali lists five methods of attaining this transcendental state, although I think there should be six. The first is awakening at birth which is not your choice. It is the choice of the parents, but most parents do not know how to produce children with an awakened sushumna. The second method is mantra, the third is *tapasya* or austerity, the fourth is the use of herbs, the fifth is raja yoga and hatha yoga, and the sixth is *guru kripa*, the grace of the guru.

Do you have a message for us?

We have come to understand and believe the importance of dhyana yoga for human evolution, for gaining total control over the pranic and mental forces, in order to enable us to cast out diseases and soothe the mind. I am not talking about a miracle, but about how the mind controls itself through dhyana yoga.

Yoga is ageless and the problems of man have been the same throughout history. We have not come out of the darkness although we live in illumined cities. We are no different from our great ancestors of the Stone Age. Somewhere we have to make a move and the direction is dhyana yoga. This is my message.

If you believe that the life which you have been living up to this day has given you something substantial and enduring, it is not necessary for you to carry this message back to your homes. However, if you think that there is something lacking in your life, a feeling of incompleteness and an inability to understand and solve your problems, dhyana yoga comes to you as a master key.

It has been handed down through the centuries. It is written in the *Bhagavad Gita* that Biwaswan passed this message onto Manu, Manu spoke of it to Ikshavaku, and now I have passed it on to you. For sometime this science went underground and eventually it became unknown. Now it has come forth again, throughout the world, as a panacea for many physical and mental ills of human life.

You must practise dhyana in order to awaken your sushumna. For you it is too late to be awakened from birth, but maybe your children will be able to awaken their children. Now you must turn to the practices of yoga. When, from time to time, your sushumna wakes up, with eyes and mind closed, your consciousness will open and beautiful images, fantastic experiences will unfold before your inner vision.

43

Education And Yoga

Tata Auditorium, Bombay, 15 March 1979

Yoga is one of the few traditions that have survived the accidents of history and the ravages of time. It has given a sense of discipline and spiritual direction not only to India but to the whole world. The basic purpose of yoga is education and I have dedicated myself completely to the teaching and preaching of yoga in every sphere of life, particularly in the education of our children.

We have heard that yoga is being taught in French schools, can you say something about this please?

Many experiments have been conducted and a vast amount of research has been gathered on the benefits of teaching yoga to children, both in their school and home environment. One of our major experiments began in the early 1970s at a higher secondary school in Paris. The work was done through one of my disciples, a French teacher of yoga and languages. Voluntarily, with the consent and interest of the principal of the school, she began her adventure by introducing a few yoga classes daily. In the morning she taught yogasanas and pranayama to the children and in the afternoon they practised relaxation in the form of yoga nidra.

The yogasanas were of a dynamic nature, combined with a few pranayama practices, such as bhastrika and nadi

shodhana. These practices helped the children to release some of the tensions which formal discipline does not normally allow them to discharge. It also helped them to remove lethargy which children develop as a response to certain mental or physical inhibitions. Whenever there was over excitement or lack of concentration in the children due to pent up emotions, the teacher would use these dynamic methods in order to release the tensions and allow the children to return quietly to their lessons.

The afternoon practice of yoga nidra was short, because it is difficult for children to remain absolutely still and quiet for long periods. The practice consisted of body rotation followed by breath awareness combined with imagery. Yoga nidra relaxed the whole personality of the children physically, mentally and emotionally. The mind becomes clear and one is able to contact the inner personality. As a result the learning and recall ability are greatly improved.

After a session of yoga nidra it becomes easier to impart training to the children. Experiments show that children can learn and master foreign languages in a few months, whereas previously it took several years. When the mind is relaxed, obstacles are overcome with much less difficulty. In the high school in Paris, the teachers found that the students memorized the different parts of the body in a foreign language much more easily after a session of yoga nidra.

They also held a special class for children who were slow in learning and lagged behind. These children were asked to close their eyes and concentrate on a small point at the eyebrow centre. The children practised this for three to four minutes and then began their class. The results showed improved concentration and understanding, and the children were able to be reintegrated back to the normal classes.

After months of teaching and experimenting, inspectors from the French Board of Education came and interviewed the children, their parents and teachers. They prepared a lengthy report and as a result the school was granted

financial assistance to help further their research work. This report aroused great interest amongst the authorities in the education department.

It has shown that children accept the yogic training more easily than adults. The effects of introducing yoga into their lives resulted in a more relaxed atmosphere in the classroom, improved memory and ability to understand their lessons. Relationships became smoother between teachers and pupils and between the children themselves. Since that time we have made further experiments on teaching yoga to children in different parts of the world including Scandinavia, UK, Switzerland, Germany and Australia. Research is continuing in India and many government schools are ready to begin teaching yoga to the children.

What are the physiological benefits of yoga for children?

Teaching yoga to children is part of the ancient tradition of sandhya. At the age of eight the child was initiated into the sacred thread ceremony and taught three practices by the guru. The practices were surya namaskara, nadi shodhana pranayama and Gayatri mantra. With the passage of time this tradition was lost and today people fail to understand its significance. It is accepted more as a religious custom than a scientific means of maintaining balanced development in the child's adolescent years.

At the age of seven or eight, the pineal gland which monitors the glandular system of a small child, begins to decay and the control shifts over to the pituitary. In yoga this tiny pea-sized gland situated at the top of the spinal cord directly behind the mid-eyebrow centre, corresponds to ajna chakra. Previously the function of the pineal was unknown to scientists. Some thought it was a remnant from the animal evolution. Others believed it was the seat of intuition. After further investigations, especially in the USA and in eastern European countries, we have come to the conclusion that as long as the pineal gland is functioning, it exercises a definite control over the pituitary.

The pituitary gland is very important. It is the master gland or the central parliament for the whole endocrine system. In yoga it corresponds to *sahasrara chakra*, the thousand-petalled lotus. The pituitary secretes a number of hormones by which the various glands in the body are activated and regulated. Among its secretions are certain stimulating hormones responsible for a child's development of secondary sexual characteristics. Rapid or early development influences the emotional personality, resulting in unbalanced behaviour: either overactive or underactive, positive or negative.

If the pineal gland can remain functioning for a few years longer during the period of adolescence, the sexual development of the child is delayed, preventing premature emotional responses and allowing the child to develop in a more balanced way. In every child the emotional and sexual development should take place simultaneously. If a ten year old boy or girl has the emotions of a man or woman of thirty-five, you can imagine the effects of this imbalance on the body and mind.

If the physical, mental and emotional development of a child takes place at different stages of his growth, it can result in certain diseases such as epileptic fits, diabetes, and psychological disturbance in the dimension of psychosis. Unbalanced children do not understand the meaning of discipline and can easily become terrorists in society. The indiscipline that you see in the children today is not a social reaction, that is an unscientific interpretation due to a lack of insight and understanding.

The pineal gland can create and maintain the necessary balance between the body and the emotions. The moment the degeneration of the pineal gland takes place, the lock on the pituitary is opened. This marks the beginning of sexual development. At this time children begin to show changes in their body, personality and way of thinking, as they try to adapt to their new sexual role in life.

In psychological terms you can say that when the pineal gland releases its lock on the pituitary gland, the secretion of

those hormones which stimulate the development of sexual organs and the onset of puberty, is initiated. The practices of surya namaskara, nadi shodhana pranayama and shambhavi mudra help to maintain the health of the pineal gland until the child is emotionally mature enough to face the onslaught of sexual hormones in the bloodstream.

How can asanas ensure a balanced development in children?

When I talk about yoga in the field of education, it should be understood that we are not talking about physical exercises or physical training. We don't want yoga to become another subject for examination where teachers have to mark a paper to pass or fail a child.

Up to now yoga has not been understood in the right perspective. People think that yoga builds the body, improves the blood circulation or increases the supply of oxygen to the lungs. Maybe it does, but this is not the actual purpose of yoga. Asanas are certain postures of the body which were revealed by the great rishis and munis who were the scientists of their own age. Each particular posture stimulates certain glands in the endocrinal system.

Sarvangasana, the shoulder stand pose, stimulates the thyroid gland which has a profound effect on the physical, emotional and mental development of a child. If it secretes too little hormone, the child may become sluggish and sleepy, because the body metabolism slows down. This leads to intellectual dullness and mental retardation. If the thyroid gland over-secretes, the child will be hyperactive both physically and mentally, unable to sit still or relax.

Shashankasana, the hare or moon pose, influences the adrenal glands. By regulating the secretion of adrenaline, you can help children to overcome outbursts of anger, irrational fears and other types of frustrations. Adrenaline affects the degree of tension and relaxation in the body and mind. Some children are so afraid of the dark that in the dead of night they are not able to go to the bathroom alone

or they imagine ghosts coming to take them while they are sleeping. These irrational fears can be tackled by the practice of shashankasana, because it exercises an influence on the adrenal glands of children which need to be regulated. Other useful asanas which balance the glandular system are surya namaskara, bhujangasana and marjariasana.

What can we do to help children improve their concentration?

In school we find that children are not able to concentrate. Their minds are like jumping monkeys. Through the practice of pranayama we can help them to integrate the dissipated forces of their personality while they are studying or preparing for school. Pranayama has long been misunderstood as merely breathing exercises, but it is actually intended to create a balance between the mental and physical forces.

In yogic terms these two forces are represented by the ida and pingala nadis respectively. When these two nadis flow at the same time and when the temperature is equal in both, the third important nadi, known as sushumna, begins to flow. When ida is predominant, the right side of the brain is operating. When pingala is flowing, the left side of the brain is operating. When both flows are equal, sushumna opens and the whole brain is activated.

If you are able to awaken the sushumna nadi in a child by the scientific process of pranayama, you can awaken his full creative potential which now remains dormant and hidden, but which is nevertheless a reality. You are bringing the participation of the whole brain, not only into his studies, but into all spheres of his life.

If a child is not able to concentrate on his studies, obey his parents or develop his social consciousness, it does not mean he is bad. It means he is incapable. The ability to understand situations, retain black and white images, memorize, interpret and reproduce information, are faculties of the brain. If a child is not able to do these things,

it is because his computer is incapable. We have to tackle the problems of education from this angle. Through the practices of yoga we can readjust the computer and make the brain work more efficiently.

Do you think our teachers need re-educating?

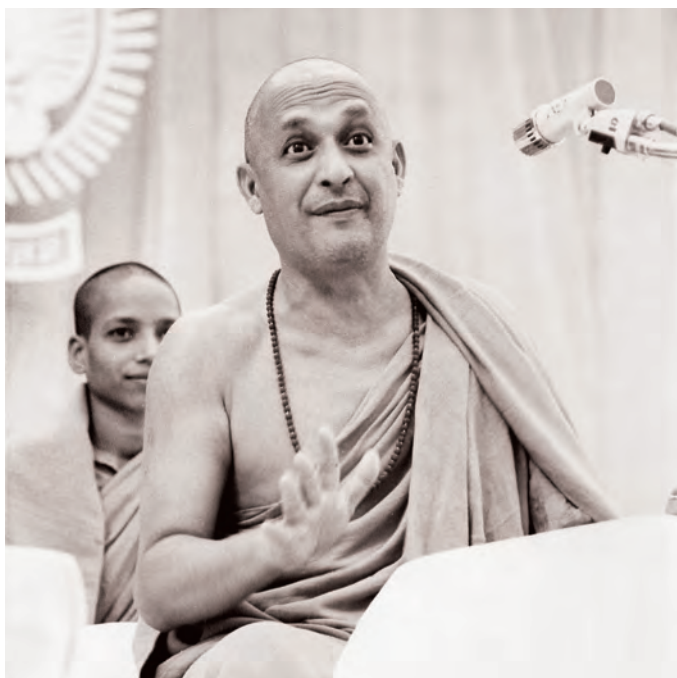
The practices of yoga are going to pave the way in solving the problems of education, which have become a great headache for teachers and officials of the education department. Children want to rebel, they want to kick. They think, 'If I cannot understand what you are going to teach me, how will I get through the examination? If I am not going to get through my exams, to hell with your education system. Are you going to give me a new capacity, are you going to show me a way of emotional balance? I am tired of being told, "Your father was a great lawyer, your grandfather a governor. What will happen to you?"' This is the wrong way to talk to an ignorant, unevolved child.

When I speak about yoga in the schools, I don't mean long classes or complicated syllabuses. Syllabuses cannot change children no matter what you teach them. I am definite in my view that it is the teachers who have to be educated first along scientific lines. Unless you have teachers, you cannot have students. If you are going to teach children yoga, what are you going to tell them? When you teach them surya namaskara and they ask why they are learning it, what will you reply? If you are unable to answer them, they will not practise it. Instead they will prefer to play tennis, golf, football, cricket or hockey. Teachers must arm themselves with sufficient knowledge of the scientific background and basis of yoga.

It is the teachers who have to be given a thorough reorientation of their knowledge about yoga first, and be trained in the practices and theory of yogasanas, pranayama, and yoga nidra. Then yoga can be properly introduced to the students as a new and creative subject whereby they can learn to relax and become more familiar with themselves.

Yogic exercises must never be repeated monotonously as part of a routine. Please do not introduce yoga as physical exercise. Teachers must understand how yoga differs from physical education. It should not be presented incorrectly by equating it with physical training. Yoga is a process of self-training, which leads to self-discovery.

What are we? We have a body and we have a consciousness. A process of awareness is going on all the time. We are following a process of evolution at all levels of existence and there are many factors to be worked out. The children we are teaching today will form our culture tomorrow. We have had our turn, now let us help the children understand the secrets of themselves and the mysteries of life. Using yoga as a remedy, let us try to soothe the minds of our restless youth by bringing more happiness and purpose into the field of education.



44

Talk on Yoga for Ladies

Residence of Padma Chadda, Bombay, 16 March 1979

Whenever I travel in India or go abroad, I speak about yoga and people all over the world have become aware of the importance of yoga in their daily lives. Only two or three decades ago people used to believe that yoga was a form of mysticism, metaphysics or religion. In the last twenty years, however, a great rediscovery and redefinition of yoga has taken place. Scientists and scientifically-minded people have conducted extensive investigations into the potential of yoga and they have discovered that the different systems of yoga have a definite scientific bearing on the human body, mind and emotions.

How do yogasana affect the physical body?

The use of yogasana for curing diseases of the body is well known and accepted, however, this concept needs to be extended. Yogasanas are not physical training exercises as many people think. Recent scientific research has revealed that asanas influence the endocrinal secretions. The literal translation of the word yogasana is 'yogic posture'. When the body assumes a certain position, the nervous system, the glandular system and various organs of the body, are influenced in a certain way.

In *paschimottanasana*, the back stretching pose, for example, when you bend forwards with the legs outstretched

in front of you, there is a natural pressure exerted by the upper part of the body on the uterus as well as the intestines. Therefore, it is a beneficial asana for women suffering from prolapse of the uterus. Paschimottanasana is more than just a physical exercise. It also has a beneficial influence on the abdominal organs, including the liver, pancreas, spleen, kidneys and adrenal glands. As such, it can be used in the treatment of diabetes. Paschimottanasana along with halasana and other forward bending asanas, stimulate the pancreatic gland to produce insulin.

Sarvangasana, the shoulder stand pose, is an excellent asana for most thyroid gland disorders. It regulates and improves the general functioning of the thyroid and helps to remove all disorders of the eyes, ears, nose and throat. If the thyroid is overactive, it stimulates the secretions and if there is underactivity, it reduces the hormonal secretions.

Experiments performed on *bhujangasana*, the cobra pose, have shown that it has a beneficial effect on the respiratory, circulatory and digestive system. It also removes mental tensions such as depression, anxiety and hyperactive states.

Yoga postures are not really exercises meant for slimming purposes. They do not reduce weight by the force of repetition of movements, but by balancing the hormonal secretions and by creating an equilibrium in the metabolic functions of the body. In physical exercise you bend the body backwards and forwards in a dynamic manner to exercise the muscles. However, when you perform an asana, even if you only hold the final position, it is enough.

When asanas are maintained for some time, the muscles relax and the pressure applied to the body in the final pose is different to other forms of physical exercise. It results in deeper and slower breathing, activation of the blood circulation without extra strain on the heart, spinal manipulation, increased awareness, effects on the endocrine system and more subtle effects on the psychic centres of the body.

This knowledge is not only based on what we have learned from our previous teachers, but it is the result of scientific investigations which are being conducted all over the world today. Research has been carried out on asanas, pranayama and meditation, as well as on the different branches of yoga and their effects. What happens to the body, to the different organs in the body, to the brain and mind, when one practises the various systems of yoga?

Everyone should know the answers to these questions, especially women, for you are our mothers, our creators. We have learned good and bad from you. What we are today is what you have made us yesterday. What we shall be tomorrow is what you will make us today. It is essential that you have first-hand knowledge of yoga for the sake of your children, your marriage and your own personal wellbeing.

Many of the problems that women are facing in their lives such as sexual fears, fantasies, suppression, depression, problems in childbirth and in marital relations, difficulties during menstruation and menopause, can be successfully overcome by the regular practice of certain yoga techniques.

Yoga is not only for self-restraint or for God-realization. Maybe it is, but much more than that, the different branches of yoga, such as hatha yoga, karma yoga, bhakti yoga, jnana yoga, raja yoga, kundalini yoga, kriya yoga and mantra yoga, have an immediate influence on the physical, mental and emotional structure of the human being.

Will the practice of dhyana yoga reduce tension?

One of the most important forms of yoga for women today is dhyana yoga. It is ideally suited for those in need of mental peace, one-pointedness, freedom from tension, and for those who want to transform the basis of their nature. By meditation I don't mean just closing the eyes and forgetting everything. Dhyana yoga is a process by which you expand the dimensions of your mind. It is total awareness, not lack of awareness, total attentiveness, not unconsciousness.

Everywhere people are asking, “How can we make the mind still and attentive?” As long as the mind is distracted by the external senses, it will remain in a disturbed, restless state. The eyes, ears, nose and tongue run after the sense objects throughout the day and night. Even while sleeping and dreaming, the mind and body do not find proper rest. The way of dhyana yoga is to collect the wandering tendencies of the mind around one central object for ten to fifteen minutes daily. With regular and continued practice, the pressure of accumulated tensions exerted on the brain, the heart and the nervous system, from, is decreased.

Can the power of thought affect the health of the physical body?

Hatha yoga includes techniques for purifying the body such as neti, dhauti, basti, nauli, trataka and kapalbhati. These practices are essential for people living in the world whose bodies are full of toxins and disease. It is not only for the body but also for the mind which is always thinking, continually jumping and wandering like a drunken monkey. When the mind becomes angry or upset, when there are passions and fears, it not only affects the psychological state, but it also has effects on the physiological level.

When you are afraid, your adrenal glands secrete hormones to prepare the body for attack. When you are worried, the pancreatic glands react. When passions arise, the ovaries or gonads are stimulated. With states of anxiety, the heart, thyroid and pituitary glands react. A thought is not only mental; it also influences the bodily mechanisms. It can create peptic ulcers, insomnia for days and even cancer. On the other hand, a thought can also induce a calm and peaceful night's sleep. Such is the power of thought and this is why dhyana yoga is so important. The practice of asana is not enough for the fast thinking, fast moving woman of today.

Will the practice of dhyana bring peace and unity?

Do not think that as householders or mothers you can manage with asanas, because meditation is far too supramental or abstract and is meant only for highly evolved people who are accomplished in asana and pranayama. Dhyana begins with the earth, with the gross, physical body. When dhyana soars high into the area of spiritual life, it brings a constant change in the atoms and molecules of this physical body. Fifteen minutes of meditation daily helps your digestive system. It lowers the inner body temperature and when the temperature is less, longevity is greater. Increased inner heat decreases an individual's lifespan.

Practise any mantras of your choice without inhibition. It may be *Om*, *Rama* or Gayatri. Combine your mantra with pranayama and bandha to accelerate the effect. Learn the three stages of pranayama: *pooraka* or inhalation, *kumbhaka*, or retention and *rechaka* or exhalation. Practise in a comfortable sitting asana. Siddhasana is the best, followed by padmasana, vajrasana and swastikasana. Practise bandha at the time of breath retention.

Adjust your mantra with pooraka and rechaka in the ratio of 1:2. If you inhale for one unit of Gayatri, you must exhale for two units. Retention is not necessary in the early stage. With regular and continued practice, you will find that five rounds of this pranayama coupled with bandha and mantra will give you sufficient experience of dhyana. These fifteen to twenty minutes that you dedicate every day will go a long way in bringing peace and unity into your personality.

I can discuss yoga with you for a long time and this is one subject that the next generation will talk about. It will be a much more peaceful generation, because everyone, including your children, are going to practise yoga and will experience the shanti that comes from within, not from without. A great cultural wave or cultural revolution has been taking place, not only in India, but all around the world. The thinking people, the educated and scientifically-minded people, have come to understand that the solution to man's worries,

tensions and anxieties, the way to achieve peace of mind, lies in the practice of yoga.

My one sincere request to all of you is: arm yourselves with the knowledge of yoga. It is not a limited science. It is a vast science with scope to influence education, mental and physical disorders, family life and personal life. It can control the unruly behaviour of your mind. After all the research carried out on the effects of yoga, I have come to one conclusion – if there is any science that is complete and profound, as well as absolutely honest, it is yoga.



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Spiritual Transformation

Gokul Institute, Bangalore, 20 March 1979

The guru's instruction to the sannyasin is: "Keep moving for the good of many." This is how the message of yoga is being revived and carried around the globe. Its acceptance by people in every quarter of life, from family to business or from social to personal, is gaining greater momentum, aided by the many recent scientific discoveries supporting the age-old theory of yogic sadhana.

Originally yoga was meant to liberate mankind from the pain of bondage. Eventually, however, it became the creed of a select few. Now, things are changing again and it is time for you to understand yoga in the context of your own life. Within the last two or three decades we have come to realize from the results of a vast amount of research carried out, that yoga is for the man who is actively involved in day to day living.

Is this yogic culture for everyone, regardless of religion?

Until recently the majority of people did not practise yoga although they retained a respect for it. For some, yoga meant the practice of hatha yoga. For others, it was just sitting down quietly in a steady and tranquil position in dhyana. While for others, it was a life of mendicancy. Now, however, people coming from the West have personal

experience of the good that yoga does. People in India have always known that yoga can lead an individual to freedom. It is not necessary to go to the heights of loneliness and rigors in the Himalayas. We don't have to abandon the normal and natural course of our life.

In recent years we have been working on the possibility of creating a yogic culture on a greater scale. The whole of mankind, irrespective of his affiliations to religion, language or nationality, can have one culture which is an expression of his spirit and inner attitude towards life and its problems.

We have to understand the word culture in relation to a process of samskara. What happens to a man when he is unhappy and suffering from anxiety and mental neurosis? He has lost touch with the real culture within himself. His culture should encompass the greater aspect of human personality. It is not an intellectual, mental or emotional culture. It goes much deeper into the centre of man's existence.

For many years I lived with my guru, Swami Sivananda, in the Rishikesh ashram and I had the divine opportunity to serve him. During this period I had time to reflect on the matter of body, mind and spirit. After I left the ashram I wandered all over India, Nepal, Afghanistan, Burma and Ceylon, on foot, by rail or by bullock cart. I realized that it was necessary for every individual to follow a path. It is not that people do not need faith or belief, they do, but today they need something more than that. Yoga can fulfil this long sought after need. Yoga is one of the holiest mantras of humanity and it is going to be the foundation of the future world communities. It is a culture for humanity, for everyone, regardless of religion, caste or race, for those who believe in God and also for those who do not.

Swamiji, what is your definition of yoga?

We have broken the confines of yoga from mysticism and philosophy to a practical application of the techniques in one's daily life. The practices of yoga have only one aim.

Some think or declare that it is to cure disease. Others believe it develops the mental faculties by increasing the ability to concentrate. In fact, research conducted in countries all over the world has proven that yogasana, pranayama, pratyahara, mudra, bandha, dharana and dhyana can definitely relieve man's physical and mental disturbances, but the ultimate purpose of yoga is to awaken sushumna nadi. With the awakening of sushumna, the problems of each individual come to an end.

The academic definition of yoga is the union of prana and apana in manipura chakra or the union of ida and pingala in ajna chakra. All other definitions have arisen only to help people understand this basic concept. In the physical body there are two realities or universal elements known as prana and chitta. *Prana* is the vital force or life-force, and *chitta* is the mental force. Man is a combination of both. When these two energies are in balance, there is harmony in life. Imbalance results in disturbances throughout the mind and body in the form of disease.

According to the shastras there are 72,000 nadis permeating the entire structure of the physical body. They carry the flow of prana and chitta. Out of these 72,000, ten nadis are considered to be of major importance, and from these ten, three are of primary importance. These three nadis go up the spinal cord, and they are known as ida, pingala and sushumna. Ida represents chitta, pingala represents prana and sushumna represents the unseen spiritual essence of man. When ida is functioning, the right hemisphere of the brain is operating; when pingala is functioning, the left hemisphere is active, and when sushumna flows, the whole brain comes into operation.

Is it important to balance these forces of duality?

Ida and pingala flow alternately and the functions of prana and mind are maintained by these two flows. By the word *chitta* I mean the totality of awareness: conscious, subconscious and unconscious levels. It is responsible for

thinking, feeling and the functions of the mind. Chitta is present in the human body in the form of a force. Yoga does not regard the mind as a bundle of habits or samskaras, nor as a reaction of the physiological or chemical responses taking place in the body. The mind is a reality although we cannot see it. Anger, passion, desires, emotions and thoughts are not the mind, they are only formations of the mind known as *chitta vritti*. The mind or chitta is an underlying formless force, more subtle than the radioactive or electromagnetic forces of physics.

Prana is the life-force by which you live and by which your body grows. The *karmendriyas*, the five senses of action, are sustained by this pranic flow. If prana withdraws itself from your mind, your hands and feet will not be able to move, as prana is responsible for the motor nerves. The *jnanendriyas*, the five senses of cognition, are sustained by chitta. If chitta withdraws itself, you will not see, smell, taste, hear or feel. If you remove either the positive or the negative force behind the power of electricity, it will stop flowing. In the same way, in this physical body there is a duality of forces which must be kept in balance for the proper functioning of body and mind.

What is the process of evolution of matter to spirit?

In Samkhya these two forces are known as purusha and prakriti. In tantra we know them as Shiva and Shakti, and in yoga as ida and pingala or Ganga and Yamuna. The origin of ida and pingala is in mooladhara chakra and their final union takes place in ajna chakra. They flow in between these two points, crossing each other, but not making contact, at four important junctions: swadhisthana, manipura, anahata and vishuddhi. If you turn on your transistor radio, you will not be able to see the radio waves although they are definitely there. The radio acts only as a transmitter or interpreter of the radio waves. In the same way, if you dissect the spinal cord, it is not possible for you to see ida and pingala, but they are there nevertheless.

Mooladhara chakra is also the origin of sushumna nadi which lies totally inactive in man. It is lying dormant in a state of eternal sleep, empowered by the all-pervading tamoguna. Therefore, it is given the symbol of a snake in eternal nidra. *Sushumna* is the force responsible for the awakening of a higher consciousness in man and with its awakening, the higher brain centres which are normally inactive, come into operation. For centuries, as human beings, we have been trying to bring these more subtle forces into an active field of operation. This is what we call evolution.

We are not just static creatures born to eat, drink, live and die. Where have we come from and where are we going? As Lord Krishna said to Arjuna, "Many lives have gone by and many lives will come again, because evolution is an unending process." There is nothing in this universe which is not evolving, right from matter to spirit. Matter is evolving and undergoing constant change even in the realm of physics. The mind is a higher matter which is also undergoing a constant, natural and systematic transformation from age to age, from year to year.

What is the ultimate goal of yoga?

In Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras* it is written, "By the overflow of natural potentiality, occurs the transformation from one substance into another." There will come a time when mind and matter will undergo an ultimate transformation of matter into spirit. Matter is the base and within it lies a dormant energy. Fundamental change is not brought about from outside, it is inherent in the material. The mind can be transformed into higher consciousness only because the potential or *atman* is already present. Only *avidya*, darkness and ignorance, needs to be removed.

By a process of transformation of chitta, through continued sadhana, the material obstructions and manifestations of energy which prevent one from knowing one's true nature are removed and there is an explosion of shakti.

Chitta and prana must undergo this process of evolution life after life until shakti emerges from it. This is the central theme of yoga. It is through the practices of yoga that one can speed up this change from avidya to pure knowledge. Yogic sadhana helps to remove the obstacles in the way of prakriti, to bring about a transformation in the order of consciousness. When the whole structure of chitta becomes completely purified, purusha functions independently without any hindrance from the mind or the external world. This spiritual transformation is the goal of yoga.

Mahashakti which is present in every being, is known as sushumna, kundalini, Durga, Bhawani, Kali. With the awakening of sushumna, matter becomes subservient and energy becomes supreme. We live our life with matter controlling shakti and this gross matter is so powerful that it controls not only our life but our spirit and sankalpa. It is time for us to turn the tables. Shakti must become the master and ride over matter, as symbolized by the awakened Kali standing over the helpless Shiva. Kali represents the awakened sushumna or shakti and Shiva symbolizes matter. The sole purpose of all the yogic practices that you learn about is to awaken this powerful sushumna nadi. It is with this purpose that the rishis and munis made experiments for centuries and centuries trying to find out how to evolve from man's limited conditioning.

Why is it necessary to practise asanas?

I once asked Swami Sivananda why it was necessary to practise asanas and pranayamas when one could start to practise kundalini yoga straight away. After all, when I left my home I had a definite purpose in my mind and it was not the aim of becoming a guru. The people who become aware of the limitations in this life are those who have seen the possibility of greater evolution. In reply, he gave me one short sentence, "Asanas create a slight awakening in the chakras and they move sushumna slightly." I kept this in mind although at the time I did not believe it. I thought

that asanas were physical exercise and that pranayamas were breathing exercises. I thought that asanas merely loosened the muscles and that pranayama helped one to inhale more oxygen in order to keep the lungs healthy.

Today, however, after coordinating hundreds of scientific and medical researches from India and abroad, I have come to a definite conclusion. Yogasanas are not physical exercises. They are not exercises at all. Translated literally, *yogasana* means psychic posture. Nor is pranayama an exercise for inhaling more oxygen. It is not deep breathing. Likewise, simply retaining the breath for as long as possible is not pranayama. We have to go deeper into the realities of yoga. Asanas are basically postures intended to create a slight stirring in the chakras. Remember, when you are practising asanas, you are trying to influence your psychic body. The word yoga does not belong to the physical body.

Dr Hiroshi Motoyama, head of the Institute for Religious Psychology in Tokyo, has been carrying out scientific investigations into the psychic and spiritual development of people who regularly practise yogic techniques. Through a series of experiments using an EEG to measure the activity of the brain waves and GSR to measure the activity of the sympathetic nervous system, he found that there were significant differences in the physiological functions of those organs associated with each chakra on subjects who claimed to have awakened those particular chakras through spiritual practices. There was found to be a much closer relationship between body and mind than in a normal person. Physiological changes were quickly reflected in the mind and any psychological change was quickly picked up by the body. These and other results have proved to Dr Motoyama the presence of a greater potential which remains yet to be awakened within all of us.

What is the literal translation of pranayama?

The word pranayama is often mistranslated. People unfamiliar with Sanskrit divide the word into ‘prana’ and

‘yama’. However, it is actually ‘prana’ and ‘ayama’. *Ayama* means a ‘dimension or plane of existence’. The first ayama is *bhu loka*, the gross physical plane, perceptible to the mind and senses. The second is *bhuvah loka* where you perceive dreams and experience moments of hallucinations. The third is *swah loka* perceived in deep sleep. In waking, dreaming and sleeping, your consciousness goes into three different ayamas. However, there are even deeper levels of existence which we have not been able to experience so far. Our knowledge has been confined to these three and not beyond.

When a child is conceived, prana is created in his physical body and it gradually extends its area of control into the three fields of human experience during waking, dreaming and sleeping states, but no further. According to the mahatmas, there are seven ayamas or planes of individual existence symbolically termed as: *bhu loka*, *bhuvah loka*, *swah loka*, *maha loka*, *janah loka*, *tapah loka* and *satya loka*. When the pranas are awakened beyond the first three dimensions, the purpose of pranayama is fulfilled.

Our gross prana is incapable of penetrating into the more subtle bodies. Therefore, the purpose of pranayama is to create a finer prana and extend it further into *maha loka*, *janah loka*, *tapah loka* and *satya loka*. This is the reason we practise *nadi shodhana*, *anuloma viloma* and *kumbhaka* combined with *bandhas*. The practices that we undergo in pranayama are definitely not meant only for oxygenation of the blood.

Although oxygen is necessary for proper functioning of this physical body, there is something more important. It is the higher experience by which you live through many lives, by which you sustain yourself. Do you know why you are miserable, worried and afraid? These are only symptoms. The reason is we live on prana and not on *atman*. We only know the conscious, subconscious and unconscious realms of the mind. We have no knowledge of the total awareness or even a glimpse of that totality called *samadhi*.

That is why, in the practice of yoga, the awakening of sushumna is the prime purpose for which asana, pranayama, mudra, bandha, mantra, pratyahara, dharana and dhyana are prescribed. It is for this reason that tapasvis perform austerities, tantrics practise tantra, raja yogis practise meditation, hatha yogis purify the nadis, karma yogis purify the chitta and jnana yogis decide the nature of atman and the self. It is only for the awakening of sushumna that people indulge in sexual life because the pleasure derived from sexual life is just a glimpse of that higher bliss.

It is this aspect of yoga which must be given prime importance. The relief of diseases, even severe and chronic disorders, and the improvement of one's mental capacities are only side effects and by products. If you practise yoga for the awakening of sushumna, I can assure you that your pains and tribulations will come to an end. The chain of pain will break somewhere. However, if you only practise yoga for the sake of removing your diseases, it will do so much, but it will not remove the limitations from your life.

The awakening of sushumna will activate the larger part of the brain which has not been used up to now. Man uses only a small portion of his total potential. He does not even fully understand the functions of the brain. Up to now man has not ascertained whether there is a brain capable of perception beyond matter.

Imagine that you have built a house in a new town. It has a television set, fan, heater, air conditioner, and so on. The telephone and electrical lines have been installed. Everything is ready, but the electrical department has not made the connection. In order to do this they have to take a high tension wire from a substation to a transformer in the town, step down the energy and then distribute it to the newly built homes. In exactly the same way, the great prana shakti is lying dormant in mooladhara. The ultimate seat of kundalini must be awakened and converted.

What can we do to begin our spiritual journey? I have good intentions but find it hard to get started.

In order to awaken this spiritual potential, the first important thing to do is to create an idea or sankalpa in the mind. If the sankalpa is there, it can create heaven and it can destroy hell. It can destroy heaven and create hell. It can lead you to the fulfilment of your dream.

I like to think about yoga and I like to talk about it, but more than that, I want to see its realization. Yoga has to do with an evolved state of mind. In the same way as you develop your body with nutritional food, the practices of yoga can develop your mind from its present gross state to a more subtle, refined level of being. A time has to come when man must change his base of existence and activity. Rather than operating in this world through a narrow frame of mind, let him operate, let him live and think, from a higher field of consciousness.

Yoga is a science; it is not just a faith. People are now witnessing the dawning of a new era. We shall see the day when the light of yoga becomes the inspiration for all of us. Then the sankalpa of our sannyasins will be realized: “Yoga for oneself and yoga for all.”



Dharma, Tapasya and Titiksha

Bangalore, 20 March 1979

What is dharma and why is it necessary?

In vedic philosophy there are two concepts: one is dharma and the other is social law. Dharma is a matter of personal evolution and social laws are constructed by society for its protection. Many times social laws are constructed by society for a particular group without considering society as a whole.

There is an old Chinese saying, 'Where you have more laws, you will have more lawbreakers'. In every period of history, the kings, monarchs and governments who made the laws, have had police, military, officers and bureaucrats, in order to control the administration. Naturally the reaction towards such suppressive measures was more lawbreakers, thieves, murderers and more crime.

In India, from the vedic period onwards, Hindus have always tried to emphasize the necessity of *dharmā*, personal spiritual evolution. They believe that if a person follows a certain discipline, he does so because he chooses to, not because the law tells him to do it. Nevertheless, in every society, the elders constitute the laws for certain conveniences, but it should not be to penalize or suppress the people.

These laws are meant for creating social and civic convenience. We make such laws for a nation, international relationships, a particular tribe or family. There may be a

law, for example, in your family that says do not bring any drugs into the house. This rule was not made to penalize the family members, but to maintain order in the family life.

We must have laws, but the purpose should be academic rather than administrative. Side by side with law, we must have dharma, the individual spiritual discipline. Dharma always creates a harmonious relationship with the individuals you are living with, because a person who knows his dharma is aware. Personal dharma is not selfish. It cannot be a source of panic, agony and disaster to your family or friends. If conduct is destructive to the wellbeing of the community, it is *adharma*. Personal spiritual discipline is beneficial for all concerned.

Therefore, to the Chinese saying we can add, 'When you have more laws you have more thieves, but if you live by dharma, less laws are necessary, so less thieves arise'.

A person whose awareness is cosmic will always practise dharma in earnest, in the right way and in the right place. If one fails to achieve this expanded state of consciousness whereby it is possible to practise dharma, then one must first learn certain techniques and spiritual practices to increase one's level of awareness.

This means more than just knowing your dharma intellectually. It means having the vision to practise it. In an unilluminated state you spontaneously behave in such a way that you kill others for the sake of dharma in wars and crusades. History has many examples of this kind where dharma has been the source of *adharma*. If dharma is practised in community life, in an organized way, it will always end in war, disaster and hatred. The best way to practise dharma is to adopt your personal spiritual discipline.

That is why, right from the beginning, you have been taught to have a guru or spiritual guide. You have a father who guides your education and your individual character, and a mother who guides you in many domestic affairs, but they may not know about spiritual discipline. Therefore, one

must have an additional relative known as guru. Every time you are confronted with difficulties about spiritual life, it is the guru who can lead you safely back onto the right path and to eventual realization of your personal dharma.

What is the place of tapasya and titiksha in modern life?

We have a cutting machine in our printing press. Its name is tapasya, and when I purchased a bigger one it was called titiksha. If there is no cutting machine the books will not look beautiful. In the same way, you have to cut your personality to the right size and that can be done through tapasya. It is good for trimming the thick boards.

An important point to note is that the karmas of an individual should be expelled. Otherwise you have to undergo your destiny; there is no other way. If you practise titiksha and tapasya, you will exhaust a lot of karma. Many times you might think about how to get rid of this situation. Do you have to face it compulsorily? Is it inevitable to undergo the consequences of what is written in your mind stuff?

It is the law of karma that you have to undergo the consequences of both good and bad actions. However, through the practice of tapasya a lot of bad karma can be burnt off. *Tapasya* is undergoing a process of suffering spontaneously and willingly. If you do not undergo this process of suffering willingly, nature will compel you to undergo it. If you are constipated, you are going to have either diarrhoea or piles or some other disease. If you willingly accept to do the practice of shankhaprakshalana, it is going to be an arduous job for an hour or two, but it will relieve you of all the consequences of the karma of constipation. Otherwise you may have to suffer for months or years instead of one and a half hours. Tapasya is a way to reduce the period of suffering which is due to you on account of your karmas.

Even if you say there is no reincarnation, there is still karma in you. There is karma in the *sukshma*, or the subtle form, which you have inherited from your parents. In scientific terms it is the molecular inheritance, the DNA

molecules. If my father or grandfather has a disease, I am also going to have it because I have inherited it genetically. *Karma* is not only that which you have created in your previous life, it is the total inheritance from previous generations and from the environment.

This karma influences not only the course of your destiny in general, it controls each and every movement, each and every wink and sneeze, each and every pain in the body, each and every thought that comes into your mind. For the past twenty, thirty, forty or fifty years, how have the thoughts been coming? Where have they been coming from? Who propels the mind and who controls the body? Who causes and relieves pain? You live like this and you suffer, because you are forced to by karma and this karma is difficult to overcome.

What is karma and what is akarma? Great thinkers are confused by it. The movement and the behaviour of karmas are absolutely beyond man's comprehension. In order to relieve the pressure of karma in our lives, two methods have been suggested on the path of sadhana. One is tapasya and the other titiksha.

Titiksha means to be able to bear heat and cold, success and failure, praise and blame, and still remain in a balanced state of mind. In pleasure and pain, in gain and loss, in victory and defeat, the mind remains the same. Once you have balanced your mind, you must be prepared to fight in the battlefield of life. This is called titiksha, to resist and to tolerate when the mind is thrown into the extremes of life. If you go to the Middle East, it is so hot. If you go to the Arctic countries, it is so cold. When your body is exposed to extreme climates, when your mind is exposed to extreme situations, you should be able to balance it somehow. This is called titiksha.

Tapasya is to purify each and every part of the body through a particular process. It means to burn or to heat. How do you purify gold? You put it in a fire. That is called tapasya. How do you purify yourself, your karma? By

exposing yourself to certain situations. If a person criticizes you, you must stay with him. Do not try to throw him out, because he is cleaning your soul without water or soap. Everyday he is cleaning you.

Gautama Buddha, the enlightened one, had a nephew, Devadata, who was a real rascal. He used to live in the same sangha as Buddha and his disciples, but he was always talking against Buddha. Even though he believed in Buddha, he used to criticize him. Still Buddha kept him in the sangha, but one day Devadata conspired to kill him. That happened when Buddha was at the height of his eminence, when kings bowed before him. Of course, Buddha was not assassinated like Mahatma Gandhi because the attempt failed. Nevertheless, what Buddha went through with Devadata is called tapasya.

In the *Bhagavad Gita* different forms of tapasya, physical, mental and emotional austerity, are given. Do not utter those words which bring agitation into other people's minds. This austerity pertains to speech. Different types of tapasya are intended to purify the habits, nature and content of the body and mind so that the soul becomes free from the pressures of karma.



Yoga for Businessmen

Chamber of Commerce, Bangalore, 21 March 1979

When Arjuna stood on the battlefield with both armies positioned ready to begin the great war of the Mahabharata, he asked that his chariot be placed between the two armies in order to see his enemy more clearly. At that point, when Arjuna realized he would have to kill some of his closest relatives, a crisis developed within him. His mind became suspended, unable to decide. Filled with uncertainty and emotion, he uttered these words, “Oh Krishna, my limbs fail me, my mouth is dry, my body quivers and my hair stands on end. The bow slips from my hand and my skin burns all over. I am unable to stand and my mind is whirling.”

For Arjuna, this moment of high anxiety led to a change in thinking and a corresponding breakdown in body mechanisms caused by lack of discrimination. In the same way as Arjuna turned to Krishna for guidance in action, people in this age must tune themselves to their own underlying potential through the practical lessons of yoga. They must arm themselves properly to fight the many physical and mental ills that are interfering with their success in life.

What is the solution to tension and stress?

Nowadays, people in general are living in an atmosphere of stress and anxiety. Students in college or school, politicians,

managers, cultivators, housewives or even a person without a job, face tensions, fears and competition day in and day out. They gradually mount up in the personality over a period of years until they reach a point of saturation. When our resistance to continued stress weakens, it explodes like a bomb, resulting in such major disorders as high blood pressure, cerebral thrombosis, peptic ulcers, diabetes, allergies, and even mental disorders like schizophrenia. These illnesses eventuate when a person does not recognize the seriousness of stress-related diseases at an early stage. This is definitely the case with most people working in the highly competitive business and industrial world.

On a mental level a state of continued tension definitely influences our behaviour, thought patterns, clarity of mind and capacity to make careful and quick decisions. Industrialists fail, politicians make mistakes, a warrior loses a battle or a person chooses the wrong career in life, because of an error in judgement. This indicates the limited capacity of the mind to tackle problems and decisions efficiently. In management and business, in whatever form it takes, both training and experience are undoubtedly necessary. However, without a healthy body and a clear sharp mind, these attributes cannot be properly used.

The nature of professional work is conducive to stress. It requires concentrated mental effort combined with the ability to interact with other businessmen facing the same problems. These situations of stress cannot be avoided. They are part of living. Nevertheless, our reactions to them should be made with a balanced, calm and clear mind. In order to help alleviate the problems of our physical and mental disturbances and open up the full creative potential of the mind, we must turn to the ancient system of yoga and its neo-scientific concept.

What is the mind, according to yoga, and how can it be explored?

For a yogi as well as for a scientist, the potential and secrets of yoga are investigated. The physical body is a structure

continually undergoing processes of transformation in its chemical, physical and biological formation. But what is the mind? Some people perceive it as merely a thinking machine or a feeling apparatus. According to the needs of the time, we must understand that thoughts, emotions and feelings are not representative of the mind. The mind is not a biological reaction of the brain.

Yogic philosophy and now scientific experiments have revealed that the mind is finer than electromagnetic waves, and more capable and subtle than the most powerful laser beams. The mind is composed of infinite experiences, energies, *samskaras*, *karmas* and hidden potential. I am talking about the spiritual nature of the mind, which has been completely neglected by our educational, political and religious institutions. They have somehow created an unscientific impression of the mind as a socio-political product. Even deeper into the mind, at its base, is a higher dimension of existence known as *atman*.

A vast amount of research has been done in the area of mind exploration, particularly mental telepathy. One such experiment was conducted between two trained telepaths who practised transmitting thought waves over a distance of five feet. When they were able to receive and transmit the thought waves, the distance was slowly increased. In the course of time, the distance between them was increased to 1,600 miles with continued success. Finally they were confined to a copper Faraday cage beneath the surface of the sea to further test their sensitivity. This cage blocks out electromagnetic waves so that a transistor radio will not work inside. Even under these conditions, the transmitter and the receiver of the thoughts continued their telepathic communication.

The mind is a powerful unit that nature has installed in this physical body. It is made up of the subtlest elements of nature. It is controlled by the three major *gunas*: *sattwa*, *rajas* and *tamas*, the balanced, dynamic and dormant potential states. The mind is greatly influenced by the interaction of the *gunas*. Every action, thought and event

is due to the interplay of the three *gunas*. When the state of *sattwa* predominates, the mind remains quiet and concentrated. It can function without disturbances. When *rajas* is predominant, the mental energy is scattered and passions become powerful in the body. It is a very active state. When *tamas* predominates, the mind is dull, inactive, tense and slow thinking.

Do not make the mistake of equating these states with ethical and moral philosophies, by classifying one man as *rajasic* or another man as *tamasic*. The mind lives in and is influenced by the three states or *gunas* together. Within each person there is a *sattwic*, *rajasic* and *tamasic* personality. By balancing the *rajasic* and *tamasic* tendencies within us, we can awaken the *sattwic* state of being. Through the practices of yoga it is possible to awaken the dormant potential faculties of the mind and to evolve from the gross state to a higher subtle plane of consciousness. This was the ultimate purposes of the science of yoga when it was invented by the *rishis* and *seers*, when it was propagated by their *shishyas* and passed on by tradition to the present-day.

Swamiji, what is your definition of *prana* and *chitta*?

A merely philosophical definition of yoga is not enough. Yoga proper is a technical subject. It talks about the body and the mind in anatomical and psychological terms. In *hatha yoga* we always talk about three important channels in the body known as *ida*, *pingala* and *sushumna nadis*. *Pingala nadi* is the carrier of *pranic* energy, *ida nadi* is the channel of mental energy and *sushumna nadi* is the channel of spiritual consciousness known as *atman*. These three move within the framework of the spinal column in the form of energy flows which are not perceptible to the physical eyes even after anatomical dissection.

Ida flows through the left nostril, *pingala* through the right. The temperature has been found to be less in *ida*. When *ida* is flowing, the right side of the brain is operating. When *pingala* is operating, the left side of the brain is

influenced. When sushumna is awakened, the whole brain goes into operation. The flow of ida and pingala spreads throughout the entire body, controlling the different organs such as the kidneys, bladder, stomach, lungs, heart and endocrine glands. Certain organs are fed by ida, others by pingala and some by both. Through the network of these nadis, the body receives both pranic and mental energy. For total utilization of the mind, the practices of hatha yoga aim to create a balance between ida and pingala, between the mental and pranic forces. When this happens, sushumna wakes up and the hidden potential of the mind is revealed.

The word hatha itself is a composition of two syllables or bija mantras known as *ham* and *tham*. *Ham* represents prana, the life-force, and *tham* represents chitta, the totality of the mind; the conscious, subconscious and unconscious states. Thinking, learning, memory and reproduction are activities of chitta. Prana and chitta are the factors responsible for our existence. Prana feeds the *karmendriyas*, the motor nerves. Chitta feeds the *jnanendriyas*, the sensory nerves. If chitta is not operating properly, you can't see, smell, hear, taste or feel. In the same way, when prana withdraws from the body, the karmendriyas or means of expression through the hands, feet, reproductive organ, eliminatory organ and organ of speech, are limited.

When the pranic energy, or flow in pingala, is predominant and chitta subservient, there is an imbalance, a total concern for the external world. However, this excess of prana is not powerful because one is not able to control it. In the same way, when chitta or the flow of ida is predominant, that person will think a lot, create fantasies and make great plans and programs, but he does not have the power to act. I know a man who wanted to become a chief engineer in a big nuclear plant, but is working as a civil engineer with the public works department. As a result he faces, knowingly and unknowingly, a sense of frustration which lies at the bottom of his personality, creating a great obstacle in the events and promises of his life. It hinders and interferes with his

daily business affairs, affecting his behaviour, relationships, partners, directors, subordinates, family and friends.

To attain harmony and balance between these two great forces of the personality, hatha yoga and dhyana yoga are taught.

How do the chemical secretions in the body and brain react to yoga practices?

For those people who tend to rely on their mental energy, especially professional businessmen, there is an important point to note in relation to yoga. Every single thought, emotion, impulse and reaction influences the chemical secretions in the brain. These secretions are known as *amrit* and *vish*, or nectar and poison. They regulate the body's anabolic and catabolic processes, the turnover or creation and destruction of cells and tissues in the body. Disturbances in the workings of this system can create such severe diseases as cancer.

Emotions, fears, jealousies, greed, anxiety and uncertainty of life exert an influence on the behaviour of the endocrine glands and their secretions. While certain hormones can kill you, other hormones can help to eliminate disease in one day. Imbalance can create cancer or cause cardiac breakdown. These hormones can also relieve you immediately of the most massive heart attack. If the pituitary gland is disturbed in a certain way, a hormone called prostaglandin kills the egg immediately before it is able to be fertilized, and a woman will never have a child.

With continued stress and strain, the parasympathetic nervous system, controlled by *ida nadi*, will be obstructed. An imbalance will be created in the neuro-endocrine system due to the body's weakened reaction to prolonged stressful situations. One common outcome of this blockage is diabetes. The crux of the problem is not in the pancreas as current medical science believes, it is in the behaviour of the parasympathetic nervous system, which is a complex reality. It has to be rendered free of the effects of prolonged stress

by initiating a change in the upper parliament of the mind. Once the parasympathetic nervous system is rejuvenated and repaired, it will again ensure the secretion of insulin.

There is an enzyme termed urokinase secreted into the blood which can immediately resist the onset of a cardiac attack. Particularly during the period of your life between fifty and sixty, in moments of high anxiety and fear due to taxation worries, managerial difficulties or the political situation of the country, the body will be unable to produce this hormone. If the body is not producing enough urokinase, the blood cells called platelets will stick together and may result in a heart attack. In the same way there are other hormones which control the functions of the kidneys, pancreas, digestive and reproductive systems. Yoga never underestimates the role of hormonal secretions in the body. They are powerful agents.

In yoga and tantra the pituitary gland corresponds to sahasrara chakra. The pineal gland corresponds to ajna chakra. The adrenal complex corresponds to manipura chakra. The thymus gland corresponds to anahata chakra. The testes and ovaries correspond to swadhisthana and mooladhara chakras. The different glands in the body are controlled by the chakras. In modern physiology these vital centres are termed the sacral plexus, solar plexus, cardiac plexus and cervical plexus.

No matter who you are or how intelligent you are, if you are not able to control the flow of energy in the ida and pingala nadis, the behavioural functions of the hormones, or the chemical secretions from the brain into the body, you are going to fall ill. The relief that medical science can give you will be very limited. For this reason, the practices of hatha yoga are of primary importance because they render this physical body free of toxic elements and influence the vital psychic centres. A combination of hatha yoga and dhyana yoga offers a practical solution to the damaging effects of mental and physical disorders due to hormonal imbalance.

Which yoga practices should we do and how do we apply them in life?

Every asana exerts a mild influence on the glandular system by stimulating the chakras slightly. Pranayama has a deep influence over the nervous system. Just as a cigarette has a mild influence and ganja has a more intense effect, so it is with asana and pranayama. Pranayama is a powerful tool. It acts like a bomb in transforming the human personality. The yoga shastras say pranayama is a means to control not only the prana but also the chitta and the whole concept of time, space and object. It is a system in which you extend the possibility of prana shakti into other spheres of your existence, beyond the waking, dreaming and sleeping dimensions.

Although the practices of yoga have become well known to people in all walks of life, still many businessmen do not understand how the chanting of *Om*, for example, can affect their business relationships. I quote the experience of a well-known company in Germany. Whenever their board of directors gathered together for meetings, there were always major disagreements, conflicts and problems, ultimately ending in bitter relationships and lack of cooperation. As a solution they introduced certain practices of yoga into their program. Before the meeting began they extinguished their cigarettes and closed their eyes for five to ten minutes. First they chanted *Om* several times together with a long *O* and short *M*. Then they concentrated for another three to five minutes on the natural breath which flows continuously, repeating mentally the mantra *Soham*. After finishing the practice they began their business affairs. They found that this short and simple practice of yoga helped them not only in maintaining harmony and vitality in the meeting, but also in tackling the crucial problems of business in an efficient way.

For Hindus *Om* is a sacred mantra, but for scientists of the future generation, *Om* may become a powerful tonic for tuning the whole mind. In the University of Medicine,

Barcelona, doctors have conducted research into the effects of *Om* chanting on the brain. Men and women of all ages, executives, students and housewives chanted *Om* in a variety of ways. They used short *O* and long *M*, long *O* and short *M*, equal *O* and *M*. They recorded the results on a sophisticated polygraph machine including ECG, EEG and GSR, registering hundreds of impulses simultaneously taking place in the body, as well as the alpha, beta, theta and delta waves.

Apart from changes recorded in different parts of the body, the most outstanding result was that the brainwaves alternated between alpha and theta. When *O* was being pronounced, alpha frequency was registered; theta frequency was recorded when *M* was chanted. A state of alpha intensity corresponds to a deep state of relaxation, and theta frequency represents a state of creativity and inspiration associated with states of deep meditation. Now the overall effect of these two alternating waves in the brain is a state of dynamic tranquillity. On the other hand, the state of relaxation normally experienced by an executive during a busy working day is one of passive tranquillity, where the mind feels lethargic and regresses back into the state of *tamas*. This dull state of relaxation can also be induced through the use of narcotics, tranquillizers, alcohol or fatigue.

As a human being living in this period of modern technology, you must pause for a while and become aware of a bright light on the horizon. You are at the crossroads. You must decide whether your life will continue in the same rhythm as in the past or whether you will take a better, higher way of life through the practices of yoga.

Have you any advice on how to introduce a yoga discipline into one's life?

In yoga we say get up in the morning at four am. Practise twenty minutes of asanas, ten minutes of pranayama, fifteen minutes of dhyana, and in this way prepare yourself for the day ahead. Not only is this a part of yogic discipline, but

it should be an important discipline for any businessman, because he has to mobilize all his mental, emotional and psychic energies for managing the conflicts, worries, competition and financial problems that he faces daily. Sometimes your spiritual energies are also needed, for without intuition you will not succeed in business affairs. Business is not only dependant on logic and mathematics. Although they play an important part, they do not always work as well as intuition.

These energies combined constitute a state of dynamic tranquillity. When the mind is made wholly dynamic through the practices of dhyana yoga, it gives you excellent results. A concentrated yet relaxed mind can do the most intense work for long periods of time without tiring. It is less disturbed by both outer and inner distractions and able to remain focused on the work in hand. This one-pointedness renders the mind more powerful, enabling it to act and think with great force.

The practice of dhyana yoga can also be done in the evening when you return home from work exhausted. Practise a meditative technique for ten to twenty minutes, not more, instead of reading the newspaper, turning on the television or relying on the cigarette. Please do not think that I am against these things. Yoga does not disagree with smoking, after all, Lord Shiva also did it! Yoga only questions one's dependences on it and its effectiveness in helping a person to relieve tensions.

One of the best ways to relax is to go into your room, switch off the lights, sit down quietly for fifteen minutes and concentrate on the spontaneous natural breath which has been going on from the moment of your birth, but you were never aware of it. This practice is known as *ajapa japa*, awareness of the natural breath combined with mantra. The mantra is the silent rhythm of *Soham*, heard within the sound of the breath. Follow it with every inspiration and expiration. Hear *So* as you breathe in and *Ham* as you breathe out. The daily practice of *ajapa japa* can make you feel refreshed and dynamic once again within a short time.

What is a yogic attitude towards life?

Life as a sannyasin does not mean non-involvement with the activities which a businessman faces. The Bihar School of Yoga has its wings all over the world. The work of spreading the mission of yoga involves the practicalities of life and business, finance, property, construction of buildings, institutions and constitutions, and is done by sannyasins who are spread far and wide. Do not believe that I am a man without complications. Everything in life is not smooth, but the mind has to be smooth. Your way of thinking, your method of tackling the problems of life must be smooth.

I have been able to involve myself in the activities of life, both spiritual and institutional, and in such a way that the mind has remained in a tranquil but dynamic state. I don't believe that you must stop thinking or you should punish the mind by imposing restrictions on it. Rather, you must know how to think. The mind is your friend if it is properly tuned by the practices of yoga. However, an undisciplined mind will be your enemy in life. A good car can still kill you if it is not serviced, maintained and driven by a careful and trained driver.

The mind is like an ocean. When the devas churned the ocean they extracted fourteen jewels from it. These jewels symbolize the positive and negative qualities of the mind. These two natural tendencies of the mind stand opposite each other in conflict. One is trying to balance the mind, the other is trying to distract the mind. We must use sushumna nadi as the base and churn the mind into awakening with the vast practices of dhyana yoga.

Let things come and learn how to manage with life. *Pravritti marga* is the life of involvement. *Nivritti marga* is the life of renunciation, or non-involvement. Everyone, including sannyasins and children, belong to the path of pravritti. Let us involve ourselves in the pravritti marga with a mind that is basically tuned by nivritti. In this way we will be able to manage the affairs of life so efficiently that we will

succeed without suffering from coronary thrombosis, which is the unfortunate complaint of most successful businessmen in the world today.

Swamiji, how can one learn to accept failure in life?

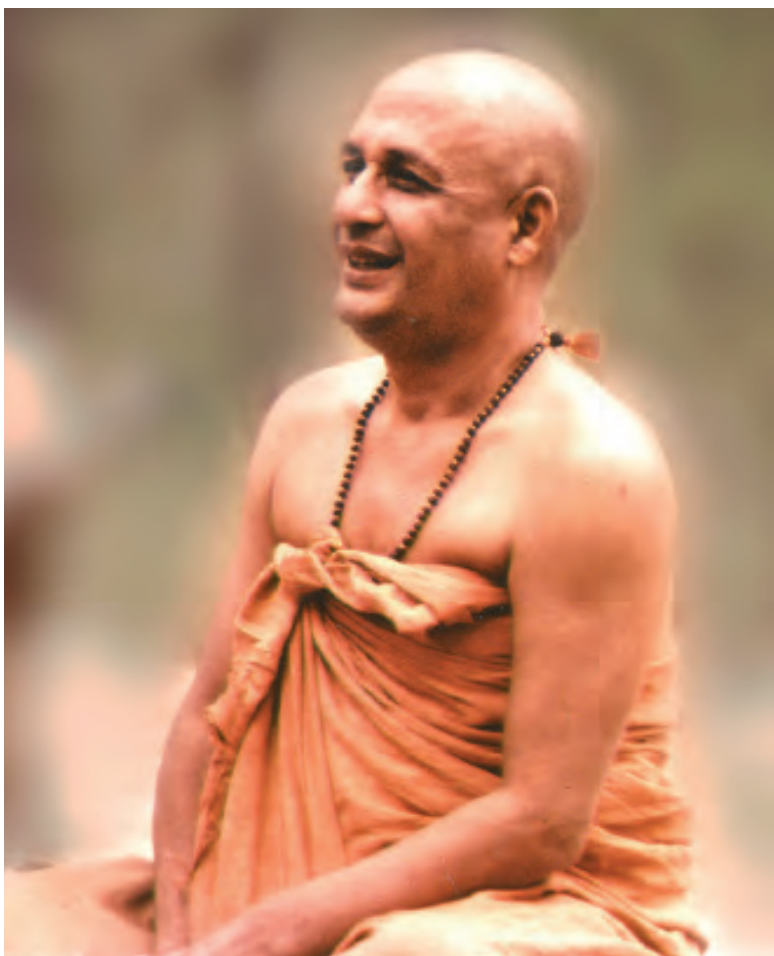
You may fail in your enterprises, but everyone at some time has failed. Napoleon and Alexander failed; the Mahabharata war was a great disappointment for Krishna. Nevertheless, failure should only affect one particular aspect of your life. It should not affect the totality of your personality. Why should failure disturb your digestion or your sleep? Why should failure change your attitude towards your wife and children? Failure is failure, accept it.

A warrior like Arjuna had to carry a bow and arrow in his hand; a man in the battle of life must also carry a bow and arrow in the form of yoga. You are riding in the chariot which is the physical body. It is being driven by five horses, the senses. The chariot is being guided by the spirit or *atman*. Do not put down your bow. Yoga has to be heard and yoga has to be practised, not only in a hermitage, monastery or ashram, but in the face of difficulties, conflicts and possible defeat.

You must understand and convince yourself of the great potential of yoga. A life of fulfilment backed by the power of yoga should be your conviction. You must say, "I have heard about yoga and my ignorance has been dispelled. I have no further doubts about yoga in my mind." In the *Bhagavad Gita* (18:78), Arjuna said to Krishna, "Wherever is Krishna, the lord of yoga; wherever is Partha, the wielder of the bow; there is prosperity, victory, expansion and sound policy. Such is my conviction."

Life offers great possibilities. Each person has a duty to perform, we cannot remain inactive. The world has become aware of the great boons of yoga, irrespective of religious or national affiliations. This yoga has been lost for a long time, but now it has arisen and is producing good teachers armed with complete knowledge of yoga therapy, yoga science, yoga psychology, yoga history and yoga culture.

Whatever their profession in business, medicine, scientific research, education or family life, people all over the world have accepted yoga with open minds. They are learning it, practising it, propagating it and above all living it. Yoga is going to be a mighty culture in the future world order, more powerful and more permanent than any socio-political creed



Exploding Kundalini

University of Bangalore, Bangalore, 22 March 1979

Can you explain kundalini yoga?

The subject of kundalini yoga has become very popular in India as well as abroad. Therefore, it is necessary for us all to understand both its practical and philosophical aspects in clearly defined terms. Just as Ananta, the serpent king, is the supporter of the whole earth, so too the serpent kundalini is the main support for all of tantra and yoga. The concept of kundalini and its ascent through sushumna, the royal road, has been symbolized in many stories and parables of various religions throughout the world.

One of the greatest stories symbolizing kundalini is found in the tales of Hanuman, the monkey god. The story of Hanuman symbolizes the sadhana of one striving to awaken this inherent power. It is said that once as a child, he was standing watching the sunrise. Suddenly he felt hungry and leapt into the sky and ate the sun, believing it to be a huge shiny red apple. Immediately the three worlds became dark and the gods grew panicky. Hanuman definitely did not eat the sun. It is merely a symbolic expression representing the withdrawal of prana or the solar force from the body into the sushumna passage. This is the secret understanding of kundalini.

Is kundalini yoga part of tantra?

Kundalini yoga is a part of the tantric tradition. Although the word *kundalini* literally means coil, according to tantra it is derived from the word *kunda*, meaning a deeper place, like the havan kund. Kundalini is Mahashakti, residing in a deeper place, which is mooladhara. Many branches of yoga are incorporated within the folds of tantra, such as hatha yoga, mantra yoga, kriya yoga, laya yoga, and above all kundalini yoga. The prime purpose of tantra has always been to awaken this great dormant potential and evolve the human consciousness beyond the frontiers of the mind, time and space.

The mind is limited by certain barriers, and its functions are confined to space and object. The word *tantra* is a composition of two ideas: expansion and liberation. Its aim is to expand the consciousness and liberate it from its union with matter in the microcosmic as well as macrocosmic aspect. Human consciousness is evolving constantly and can never be disintegrated totally. Death of the body does not kill the consciousness. Disease does not affect it. Tantra is the science of this consciousness.

Please can you explain the concepts of separation and union: yoga and viyoga?

It is said in the *Bhagavad Gita* that there are two eternal forces known as purusha and prakriti. They are the two forces behind the whole cosmos and behind our individual existence. *Prakriti* is the matter, the totality of manifestation. *Purusha* is the consciousness, manifesting itself further in the realm of mind or manas, buddhi, chitta and ahamkara. Existence of each individual being arises when purusha and prakriti come together.

For ages and ages these twin realities have moved together as an inseparable unit. Even today, in our individual existence, we are a composition of matter and consciousness. The eternal union between these two aspects of creation has been so great that it has not been possible

for an ordinary man with a gross and intellectual mind to separate them. The philosophy and practices of tantra aim at breaking this inseparability. Therefore, yoga involves a process of separation, *viyoga*, and when pure consciousness is disconnected from entanglement with the mind and the manifested world, union, *yoga*, is the result.

What is the importance and function of the two major nadis?

In relation to the microcosmic unit, there are two forces within our physical body. *Prana* is the life-force and *chitta* is the totality of awareness: the conscious, subconscious and unconscious states of mind. Combined they are responsible for our knowledge and action. They control the *karmendriyas*, senses of action, and the *jnanendriyas*, senses of cognition.

Prana and chitta are channelled through our physical body in two nadis known as ida and pingala which flow within the framework of the spinal column. Just as radioactive waves pass through the different lines in a transistor radio but are not perceptible to our naked eye, the flow of mental and pranic energy in ida and pingala is not perceivable even after anatomical dissection of the spinal cord. Nevertheless, they are a reality.

Ida flows through the left nostril and pingala through the right nostril. Ida represents coolness, the moon and the mental and psychic functions. Pingala represents the sun, heat, energy and activity. Recent scientific investigations have shown that the temperature of the left nostril is slightly lower than the right nostril, supporting the age-old yogic theory.

According to the yogic definition, the word *nadi* comes from the root word *nad*, to flow. It is not a vehicle or a nervous channel, which indicates a physical part of the body. *Ida nadi* is the flow of mental consciousness and *pingala nadi* is the flow of pranic consciousness. These two nadis flow throughout the body, controlling every part, organ, action and reaction, of the whole gross, subtle and causal being.

These two nadis emanate from the base of the spinal cord at mooladhara chakra and terminate at the top of the spinal cord at ajna. In the masculine body, mooladhara chakra is situated at the area of the perineum in between the excretory and the urinary organs. In the female body, it can be found at the posterior side of the cervix. Mooladhara chakra is known as the seat of kundalini and ajna is the control centre. From mooladhara, pingala emanates from the right and ida from the left. They curve and cross each other at the different chakra points, swadhisthana, manipura, anahata, vishuddhi, and finally join at ajna.

The third and most important channel flowing up the centre of the spinal cord is known as *sushumna*, the synthesis or spiritual nadi. The force of sushumna is kundalini. In tantra, kundalini is said to be sleeping in mooladhara chakra in eternal nidra wrapped in tamoguna. As long as kundalini is in this dormant state, sushumna is considered to be tamasic, but when ida and pingala are balanced, this tamasic force is activated and awakened. If the awakening of kundalini takes place prior to the balancing of ida and pingala, however, the sadhaka may suffer severe physical, mental and emotional disturbances.

Ida and pingala nadis are of prime importance when we talk about kundalini yoga. All the karmas, samskaras, frustrations and jealousies that the mind and prana are made up of, are contained in the flow of ida and pingala. This means that all the things you have experienced in the past remain in the system of ida and pingala in a microcosmic form. Unless these samskaras and karmas, good and bad, painful and pleasant, are exhausted and purified, the awakening of sushumna may result in total imbalance of the nervous system. In extreme cases a person may suffer insanity or become a criminal.

Psychic awakening in an individual does not necessarily take place with the awakening of sushumna. Sushumna is an independent system and does not lie across ida and pingala. Many experiences which aspirants have may correspond

to the awakening of prana in pingala or consciousness in ida. The hatha yoga shastras clearly explain that harmony and balance are absolutely necessary between the mental and pranic forces before the awakening of sushumna or the experiences of samadhi dawns.

When ida flows, the right side of the brain functions, and when pingala flows, the left side of the brain operates. When the flow in sushumna is activated, the whole brain participates in the activities of life. Sushumna is the pathway for the upward ascent of kundalini. It does not flow through any other nadi. When ida and pingala flow at the same time, when their temperature is equal, when the differences between prana and consciousness are broken down, and the various aspects are in perfect balance, kundalini is compelled to travel through sushumna nadi to *brahmarandhra*, the higher centre in the brain.

It is clearly written in the shastras that one should not awaken kundalini without first awakening sushumna. If you have a motor car but there is no roadway leading from your home, what are you going to do? In the same way, when kundalini wakes up, you have to give it a passageway. The opening up of sushumna becomes the means of communication between the lower and higher worlds.

What is the necessary preparation for kundalini yoga?

Before the awakening of sushumna the practices of hatha yoga, including asana, pranayama, mudra and bandha, are essential in order to purify the functional and structural form of ida and pingala. It is important for the aspirant to understand that the process of awakening this divine consciousness needs thorough, complete and expert planning. It must be done gradually under the guidance of one who has gained previous knowledge of the path.

The word hatha is a composition of two syllables, *ha* and *tha* representing the two forces of sun and moon, prana and mind, Shiva and Shakti, Ganga and Yamuna. The definition of hatha yoga has been misunderstood and

mistranslated as physical exercises, but it is an esoteric system intended to balance these forces and awaken man's deeper personality. Asanas are not physical exercises merely for health. They are designed to give a mild stimulus to the chakras so that when the awakening takes place, one will not be startled.

We have come to understand this more clearly in the light of modern scientific research. In the same way, the practices of pranayama are not deep-breathing exercises for increasing the supply of oxygen into the body. Oxygen alone is not the pranic force that helps you in yoga. What is important are the ions which are released from oxygen after a process of separation induced by the practices of pranayama.

For example, in nadi shodhana pranayama a concentration of ions or pranic energy occurs around ida and pingala nadis, increasing in intensity according to the number of rounds practised. In normal breathing this does not happen. With continued practice of alternate nostril breathing over a long period of time, this concentration is harmonized and sushumna awakens.

Some people who are not familiar with Sanskrit, misinterpret pranayama as control of the breath. However, the word pranayama is composed of two roots, prana and ayama. *Ayama* means a dimension or field. Just as there are radioactive and electromagnetic fields, there are also pranic fields in the physical body. In the course of human evolution, we have only been able to extend the prana into the first three dimensions of our existence, the gross, subtle and causal bodies, corresponding to the waking, dreaming and sleeping states.

However, there are seven bodies, one that can be seen, two more that can be felt, and four others that can neither be seen nor felt. These correspond to the chakras and to the seven planes of consciousness. The seven planes or *lokas* are bhu, bhuvah, swah, mahah, janah, tapah and satya. The purpose of pranayama is to extend the permeation of prana into these other planes, into the realm of samadhi and beyond.

When prana which is now controlling the karmendriyas and jnanendriyas is withdrawn from every part of the body and is no longer bound to mooladhara chakra, kundalini breaks out. When Hanuman ate the sun, he stopped the flow of pingala nadi, also known as surya nadi. As a result the function of prana stopped, the heart and the brain ceased to work and the other organs were only nominally existing.

He transcended the waking, dreaming and sleeping states, and the three worlds went dark. Feelings, sensations and the functions of the mind ceased. This is achieved through the practices of moolabandha, uddiyana bandha and jalandhara bandha. When you practise these three bandhas in combination with pranayama, you are directing the prana into another ayama, into the field of kundalini. Pranayama stimulates prana and the bandhas direct it to the required centre, preventing dissipation.

Hatha yoga, asanas and pranayama are intended initially to prepare the sadhaka for bearing, enduring, holding and understanding the experiences of kundalini yoga. Awakening of kundalini influences the physical elements in the body, so it is understood in kundalini yoga that the physical body should be rendered free of toxic elements. The body that has been purified by the fire of yoga will be the most permanent and trustworthy base for the awakening of kundalini.

Do we have to control the mind in our practice?

For kundalini to rise, the body must be able to cope with its force and the nervous system must be strong, healthy and balanced. When these preparations are complete, the practice of dhyana yoga begins. It is believed by some practitioners of yoga that dhyana is a method of concentration. However, in tantra it is said that concentration is an injustice to the free flow of the mind. The nature of the mind is to expand and to flow. You can direct the mind but you cannot control it.

Therefore, in kundalini yoga you will find that no effort is made to force the mind or to concentrate it on

one single point. Supreme awakening does not depend on concentration. It has nothing to do with the functions of the lower mind. The purpose is not to change the nature of the mind, because the mind is not an ethical, moral, religious or national entity. This life is a force; the mind is a *vritti*, a formation.

In kundalini yoga we don't waste time fighting or interfering with the natural behaviour of the mind. For a few years you work on hatha yoga, kriya yoga and pratyahara. Practise nadi shodhana until it is perfected, then Gayatri mantra can be incorporated into it. In addition practise jalandhara and moolabandha in antaranga kumbhaka and jalandhara, uddiyana and moolabandha in bahiranga kumbhaka.

After one round of nadi shodhana, pause for a while in chin mudra with eyes closed and fix your gaze at the nosetip, *nasikagra mudra*. When your pranas become quiet and tranquil, start another round. After the second round, again pause and practise nasikagra mudra. In this way continue for five rounds of nadi shodhana pranayama coupled with bandhas and combined with your own mantra or Gayatri mantra. If you use Gayatri let one mantra form one unit. If you use some other mantra you will have to adjust the ratio according to your capacity.

Please will you talk about the awakening of kundalini?

The arising of kundalini is a historical event in life when the individual departs from his involvement with lower forms of knowledge into higher realms of understanding. In the evolution of consciousness there have been definite historical landmarks. One was when it went from the unconscious to the conscious in the vegetable kingdom. Another was when it departed from vegetable life to the instinctive life of the animal kingdom. Another was when it departed from the animal life to the human life.

The awakening of kundalini is the most important landmark in the history of humankind, when the individual

will make an absolute departure from the realm of reason into the realm of intuition. Kundalini yoga is intended to revolutionize the consciousness of humankind to fully understand the concepts previously known only through our intellect. Kundalini is the opening of that era in human life when the ordinary mind becomes a supermind.

Today the thinking individuals belonging to any religion in the world are becoming more and more aware. They want to know how to make an exit from their present existence and its limitations. They want to know the purpose of life and the end they are working towards. All over the world people are seeking the truth. Can it be found in the church, temple or mosque? Can it be read in the scriptures? Is it the awakening of kundalini?

We have been searching for a long time, and from what I have seen and experienced in life, I am not going to accept anything else but the practical side of yoga. It is the one way that is open to all. The practices are available and you are not asked to change your vocation, to renounce your family or to believe that marital life is sinful. Tantra is one of the few philosophies throughout history that regards marriage as the holiest relationship that a man can have with a woman. It is known as dharma which is the primary philosophy of tantra and yoga. Marital life is the rock base on which kundalini yoga is situated.

The yoga shastras are dedicated to one purpose only: how to prepare the millions and millions of people all over the world, people with sensual, animalistic, passionate, fearful, intellectual and sattwic natures, for the awakening of kundalini. It is for this purpose that the concepts of dharma and karma have evolved, that ashrams and temples were built, and the order of guru and shishya was created.

As a householder with involvements and responsibilities; with mental, moral, emotional and physical difficulties in daily life, keep one purpose in mind: prepare yourself for the awakening of that great power. With this aim you will achieve success in life. Finally, please do not be in a hurry for this

experience. First train your mind. In order to discover if you are ready for the experience of the beyond, test yourself to see whether you can endure anger, worry, love and passion, disappointment, jealousy, hatred, memories of the past, sufferings and sorrows for the dead.

If you can maintain balance of mind in the face of these minor mental and emotional conflicts, if you can still feel joy when the scales are heavily loaded against you, you are an aspirant for kundalini yoga. When all your preparations have been made, sit down, practise your kriyas and wait for the bomb to explode. Kundalini will awaken from its slumber, bringing about a historical change in your life.



Dhyana Avastha

*Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd., (BHEL), Ramachandrapuram,
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Today yoga has become a universal culture, a part of day-to-day life. The science of yoga has impressed people so much that it is now well known and accepted by everyone. However, there still remains a powerful and important aspect of yoga to be taught and that is the science of dhyana yoga.

In the past people were taught that dhyana was a religious practice meant only for those who wanted to remember God or to attain samadhi. Even now many people feel that it is a practice which bears little relation to the man who is actively involved in business and family life. Some people also believe that meditation is a mystical practice meant only for the select few. It has been given various names and adjectives and referred to in some books as part of occult practices.

In recent years, however, scientific investigations have made new revelations about the effects and benefits of dhyana yoga. Although it has a definite influence on the psychological, psychic and emotional levels, its overall effect on the physical body is significant. I have heard many people say, "Yogasana and pranayama are physical exercises. You should practise dhyana yoga; it is spiritual." This concept

is not correct. The practice of dhyana yoga transforms the structure of the brain and physical body as well as the consciousness.

What changes take place during the practice of meditation?

Research carried out in the University of Medicine, Barcelona, has shown that physical changes do take place in the state of dhyana. The mantra *Om* was chanted by a group of people at different times and they pronounced it in different ways. The mantra was chanted aloud and recorded by an EEG machine which broke down the various frequencies and showed their effects on the brain. The first sound *O* produced alpha waves, and when the sound *M* was pronounced, the machine recorded theta wave activity. Both of these states are associated with the more internal realms of the mind which include intuitive and creative powers.

Normally the mind works at a high level of activity and involvement. These frequencies are classified as beta waves. The attention is fully in the outside world, sometimes anxious and tense, and sometimes concentrated. When you close your eyes and start the practice of dhyana, within ten minutes the beta frequencies will change and start altering between alpha and theta. The mind becomes free and enters into deeper states of relaxation.

Further experiences have revealed that the practice of meditation lowers high blood pressure by slowing down the heart rate. The metabolic and respiratory rates are also reduced. There is less consumption of oxygen and less production of carbon dioxide in the tissues. Muscular tension also decreases. Normally when the body reacts to stress, the cells require more oxygen. New investigations are showing that the state of dhyana produces changes in the behaviour of the pituitary gland, the master controller of the endocrinal system.

From the results of these experiments we know that dhyana yoga can help to change our whole life pattern.

As such we should not see it as a practice for sannyasins or yogis who want to achieve advanced states of concentration. Dhyana can be practised by those who believe in a higher reality and by those who do not. It can be practised by those who want to attain samadhi and also by those who have no thought of samadhi but want their brain, heart, lungs and endocrine glands to function properly. This is the importance of dhyana yoga in our modern age.

Is there evidence that meditation can harness the mind?

Besides the research conducted into the effects of yoga on the physical body, experiments have been conducted in USA and Russia into the power and nature of the mind itself. The mind is a force surrounded by a field, in the same way as there are pranic fields, electromagnetic fields and radioactive fields. This has been proven by a number of experiments made in the field of ESP, telepathy and psychic phenomena. In the state of dhyana, the area of the personal field becomes broader and the limitations of the individual are overcome.

The mind is not a bundle of habits or a creator of sin. Today we have kicked out these theories. The mind is something which we have yet to understand in its totality. Man has discovered a dormant energy in matter and he knows that matter can be converted into energy and energy into matter, but he has yet to realized what lies behind the matter. Energy is not the ultimate analysis of matter; it is consciousness, and within two or three decades scientists will be supporting this age-old theory.

Researchers are now beginning to turn their attention to the mind, because in a greater perspective, the mind is also a matter in need of analysis. In order to understand the real shape and power of the mind, it must be redefined. It is not a thinking apparatus. Thoughts, emotions and desires are not the mind, but formations or *vruttis* of the mind. The mind is a formless substance which is the most invisible personality of man.

The practices of dhyana yoga begin with the mind. In the same way as the scientist spends his time separating the elements and analyzing the potential of matter, in dhyana yoga the mind is regarded as matter and the whole personality is dissected, analyzed and separated. Therefore, we must understand that dhyana yoga is an act of harnessing, knowing and using the mind. This is what mankind has failed to do up to now.

In order to experience the absolute, you have to transcend time, space and matter, for in the absolute realm of existence these concepts do not exist. Bound in the mind, they are relative. Through dhyana we can rise above this relativity, myth, fiction and false imagination, and begin to realize the real life beyond time, space and matter. In the state of dhyana one does not lose anything. One still maintains knowledge of the waking, dreaming and sleeping consciousness. One doesn't forget them, but in addition *turiya*, the transcendental state, is known.

Please can you give us a simple and quick technique to practise?

There are many ways to achieve the state of dhyana, but the easiest way is the practice of ajapa japa. This practice uses awareness of the breath and the natural sound of the breath which is the mantra *Soham*. The mind can only comprehend something which is within the scope of its grasp. Therefore, in the practice of meditation it is essential to have a basis in the form of mantra and symbol.

Meditation is not an extinction of consciousness, it is the expansion of consciousness, using these two forms, mantra and symbol, as vehicles to centre the mind. Dhyana is a state of total awareness, not one of rigor mortis or hypnosis as is so commonly believed. Many people enter into a self-hypnotic state in the name of dhyana yoga, and once it so happened to me. In the evening I sat down for dhyana at six o'clock and I got up from my asana the next morning, thinking I had entered into samadhi. It was only

later that my guru told me I had entered into a state of self-hypnosis.

The mahatmas and scriptural texts have always said that prana and consciousness should be united if you want to enter into the state of dhyana. The art of uniting these two forces is the practice of ajapa japa. Guru Gorakhnath, the founder of hatha yoga, has written a vast amount of literature on this subject. He has said that the sahaja breath flows twenty-four hours of the day. *Sahaja* means spontaneous. You have been breathing since the moment of your birth but without any awareness of the process. Even those who know that they are breathing never care to concentrate on this movement.

If you want to enter your home, you must have a doorway. The natural breath is the gateway by which you enter the realm of the mind. Gorakhnath said that each minute we breathe fifteen times, each hour nine hundred times, each day 21,600 times. Up to now we have lost consciousness of so many thousands of breaths in our lifetime. Each inhalation and exhalation is an invitation to follow the breath, but most people do not heed this invitation as they think that the breath is a mechanical process to continue life, like a piston going up and down in a machine. However, this is not the total picture.

The breath which is flowing continuously is intimately connected with the two nervous systems in the body known as the parasympathetic and sympathetic nervous system. In yoga these correspond with ida and pingala nadis which flow within the spinal cord. When the left nostril is flowing, the ida nadi becomes active and the mental functions in man become predominant and powerful. When the right nostril flows, the pingala nadi predominates and one feels physically active and dynamic. Pingala nadi is responsible for prana or the life-force and ida for the mind or mental force. These two nadis conduct the flow of prana and chitta, the two most essential forces in man.

In an electric cable there are two wires; one is positive and one is negative. One is the hot line the other is the

cold line. In the same way, pingala which is known as surya nadi or the hot line is positive, and ida which is known as chandra nadi or the cold line is negative. Experiments have supported this theory and found that the temperature of the left nadi is lower than the right.

These two nadis and breath flows, which will continue until your death, are intimately connected with the two hemispheres of the brain. The right side of the brain is controlled by ida and the left side by pingala. The wider the gap between these two aspects of individual awareness, the greater the emotional and mental imbalance. There is a third major nadi called sushumna which flows in the centre of the spinal cord in between ida and pingala. It is awakened by balancing the mental and vital forces within the body. When sushumna is awakened the whole brain comes into operation. The two forces of duality are merged and this results in greater emotional, mental and psychic balance. When sushumna wakes up the mind spontaneously enters into the experience of meditation.

These three nadis emanate from the bottom of the spinal cord at mooladhara chakra and terminate at ajna chakra, behind the eyebrow centre in the medulla oblongata. Sushumna goes up the centre of the spinal cord while the other two nadis crisscross each other at the four points, winding their way around sushumna up to ajna. Kabir Das has written: *Is bangla mai das darwaza bich pawan ka khambha* – In this mansion (the body) are ten doors and in the middle is the ‘pillar of breath’. The spinal cord is known as ‘pawan ka khambha’. Pawan is the father of Hanuman. Here it means the base of life, otherwise known as sushumna.

In the shastras it is written that when sushumna wakes up the yogi or bhogi, the disciplined mind or sensual mind, can enter *dhyana avastha*, the state of meditation. The purpose of all yoga practices, including concentration, pranayama, yogasana, mantra yoga, tantra yoga, kundalini yoga and hatha yoga, is to awaken this powerful sushumna nadi which is said to be in the centre of the spinal cord in a state of dormant potential.

The first step in the practice of ajapa japa is to develop continual awareness of the ingoing and outgoing breath. It can be done at any time of the day when the mind is wandering hither and thither. In the second stage, you try to hear the mantra *Soham* with the breath. The awareness of breath and mantra takes place in the psychic passage. There are many psychic passages, but the most important is sushumna. In this practice the mantra *Soham* goes on with each breath up and down the spinal passage. On inhalation you hear the sound of *So* and on exhalation *Ham*. In this way the pathway of sushumna is purified and awakened, and dhyana automatically becomes a reality.

This practice should be done in the early morning hours between four and six. This time is known as *brahma muhurta* and is considered to be the best time for the practice of meditation because one is able to tackle the mind in the calmest possible way. Practise your program of asanas and pranayama beforehand for they will help you to maintain proper balance and purify the body in order to awaken the psychic centres. When awakening takes place in the chakras, dhyana becomes spontaneous.

When the mind wanders should one force it to concentrate?

Dhyana is not an exercise; it is a state of becoming, a happening. When you have been able to fulfil the conditions, dhyana takes place at any time. If you try to concentrate your mind on one point it is not going to bring meditation to you directly. Its purpose is something else, to awaken another force within you. When you take a tranquillizer you automatically go to sleep without any effort. In the same way meditation will come spontaneously. The yogis of the past have emphasized this point many times, because dhyana is a state of evolution. It is a basic transformation where one acquires the ultimate knowledge.

It does not matter what worries encompass your mind or what anxieties you have been facing in life, or how forcibly

the passions are assailing you or if your mind is wandering like a monkey, still meditation can take place. I have seen people practising dhyana for over fifty years and all with the same complaint. The mind wanders. However, if the mind did not wander, there would be no mind. Restlessness is the nature of the mind. If you think that your mind will renounce its wandering tendencies until gradually dhyana avastha takes place, you are wishing for an impossible day.

In Patanjali's raja yoga system, dhyana is achieved through the practices of pratyahara and concentration. However, the tantra shastra use another approach. Do not worry about your poor mind. Do not come into confrontation with it. Do not oppose it or abuse it. If you oppose the tendencies of the mind while practising meditation, you are going to create a split. If the split becomes wide it can lead to schizophrenia. Those people who try to force themselves into meditation are only creating a psychological crisis for themselves. One aspect of the wandering mind wants to be concentrated and the other aspect wants to run away. These are the twin tendencies of the same mind coming into conflict with each other.

By trying to force concentration you are widening the gap between the two tendencies; you are creating a conflict between your ego and superego. The tantra shastras have clearly stated that meditation has nothing to do with the tendencies or devilishness of the mind. It will only come if you awaken sushumna. The shastras confirm that when sushumna wakes up, the mind drops by itself. At that time wherever you sit, your eyes automatically close and dhyana takes place.

For years I used to practise mantra sitting on the bank of the Ganga. I also used to fast continuously for a period of many days, but ultimately I found that from these experiences alone one cannot find the ultimate truth. Just a simple secret can trigger the whole process, but we want to employ complicated systems and beliefs in order to satisfy and boost our personal vanity. The secret is simple: awaken sushumna and enter into dhyana. Do not ask me how to meditate, ask me how to awaken sushumna.

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Yoga Relaxation

*Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd., (BHEL), Ramachandrapuran,
24 March 1979*

Throughout history, man has been chasing a dream and still the search continues. Amidst his darkness and ignorance the science of yoga can give to man the knowledge of himself. Not an intellectual understanding but the realization that when all else fails him in life, the light of the self will illumine his way. Although yoga is a subject based purely on the objective sciences, it touches every aspect of the individual personality including your emotional life, your way of thinking and the solutions you are seeking in your personal and professional life.

How is yoga moving forward around the world?

There is a vast amount of scientific research work being conducted into the benefits and potential of this great science which has led me all over the world, both to countries with strong religious traditions and to countries which are purely materialistic in thought, word and deed. Nearly thirty years ago in the primary stages of this research, we thought that perhaps this project would result in disappointment and frustration. I myself had decided that our beliefs must endure and live on or be destroyed once and for all, because man's ideals cannot survive on

what cannot be proven either by personal experience or by scientific evidence. The world has changed too much.

Previously there was a time when sannyasins, priests and cardinals were the high priests of our civilization, but today this is no longer true. They merely exist as an institution and do not exercise an indisputable influence on the minds of the people. The high priests of today are the engineers, doctors, professors and lawyers, because these professionals have a scientific base. Therefore, what I say about yoga should also have a scientific basis.

Yoga was once thought to be a mystical or religious science. Its philosophy was linked with black magic and other secretive, occult practices. However, over the last two or three decades, after careful examination of the results of scientific investigations into the various aspects of yogic practices, we have come to the conclusion that yoga is definitely intended for the man who is toiling, rejoicing and sorrowing in this daily run of life. It is for the man who is continually struggling with the body, mind and emotions in business, family and inner life. Thinking, feeling and acting are all problems of the personal ego, and a more efficient way must be revealed to alleviate man's intimate and intrinsic problems.

People have not been able to find a satisfactory solution in the religious and political philosophies of this world and that is why mankind has been living in a state of terror and anxiety. Look at the state of people's minds amidst the torment of their psychological and emotional struggles. The rate of suicides, sexual crimes and mental derangement is alarmingly high in the world today. It only means that the experiments have failed.

I am not referring to the scientific experiments but to the cultural traditions which have not been able to stand up to their promises and philosophies because they lack the essential elements of practical yoga. Without this they are basically intellectual in nature. Even what we term emotions are often merely an intellectual expression and

this intellectual approach cannot solve the biological, physiological, psychological and psychic problems of the individual or the society.

How can we tackle the battle of life?

The battle of life must be tackled through the practical system of yoga and what has been examined so far by the scientists and medical doctors has produced startling and positive results which support the age-old yogic theories. They have shown conclusively that the practices of yoga improve the mental, physical and emotional health of man.

In the course of these last few years they have extended the possibilities and faculties of yoga into mental hospitals, jails, educational systems and lately into the field of drug addiction. What the seers and rishis of the past knew intuitively, scientists are now beginning to discover through their experimental work. They realize now that there is something more in yoga which still remains to be examined.

Among the conclusions reached are three major ones. First, yogasanas are not physical exercises, but postures which can balance and control the endocrine glands and hormonal secretions in the body. Regular practice of asanas will help to alleviate many chronic and incurable diseases including asthma, high blood pressure, coronary disorders, digestive ailments and constipation.

Secondly, the practices of pranayama are primarily intended, not for inhaling more oxygen, but to awaken the full potential of the brain. Pranayama influences and controls the imbalances of the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous system.

Thirdly, dhyana yoga is not an intellectual, religious or mystical exercise. The practices of meditation alter the frequencies of the brain waves, lower the pressure in the coronary system and help to adjust the process of metabolism in the body.

From the many and varied practices of yoga there is one powerful and beneficial technique that I want to enlighten

you about. Yogasana and pranayama are well known and propagated throughout the world by countless numbers of yoga teachers, but the practice of yoga nidra needs an introduction.

Yoga nidra is intended to balance muscular, mental and emotional tensions. It is a perfect system for inducing relaxation by creating one-pointedness of the body and mind. *Yoga nidra* means yogic or psychic sleep. It is a state of total relaxation bordering between sleep and wakefulness. It induces a state of *pratyahara* by systematically withdrawing the awareness away from the body and the external world. In this state of deep relaxation, contact is made with the subconscious and unconscious mind, the storehouse of those fears, memories, complexes and obsessions that disturb us daily. If you can remain as a detached observer, the tensions are released without any emotional involvement or further reaction.

Yoga nidra is practised in a lying position known as shavasana. Lie down quietly with your eyes closed and relax every point of the body through the practice of autosuggestion. In order to first induce a state of physical relaxation, the consciousness is systematically rotated through the different parts of the body followed by awareness of a breathing pattern such as alternate nostril breathing. Development of feelings like hot and cold, pain and pleasure, and lightness and heaviness, are intended to create a state of emotional relaxation. This is followed by complete mental relaxation through visualization of images and stories that have powerful and universal significance.

Have investigations been carried out into yoga nidra?

Research into the effects of yogic relaxation has been conducted by Dr Datey, Head of the Department of Cardiology at K.E.M. Hospital, Bombay. He taught shavasana to forty-seven patients, men and women ranging from twenty to sixty-four years of age, suffering from hypertension. The practice included simple techniques of

rhythmic breathing and awareness of different parts of the body combined with feelings of heaviness.

In the beginning they practised for thirty minutes daily under careful supervision, in later stages by themselves. The pulse rate, blood pressure and respiration were recorded before and after each session and a record was kept of the quantity of drugs taken by each patient. These cases were followed up at regular intervals for some time afterwards. The results published in a detailed report showed a significant response in 52 percent of the patients. Headache, giddiness, nervousness, irritability and insomnia disappeared in almost all patients. Other more severe symptoms became less marked. Blood pressure was reduced, respiratory rate lowered and the use of drugs decreased in the majority of cases, whereas previously any attempt to reduce the dosage led to a rise in blood pressure.

Further investigations in Spain using an electroencephalograph revealed that during the practices of yoga nidra there is an increase in the alpha wave activity of the brain, indicating deep states of relaxation. Body metabolism slows down giving the organs of the body a complete rest. Problems of anxiety, psychosis, hysteria, irrational fears, phobias and in fact all stress related diseases, psychosomatic disorders, heart disease, diabetes, asthma, ulcers and skin diseases, can be helped by regular practice of yoga nidra. We also had success in the treatment of schizophrenia and cases of mental delirium. Yoga nidra is an easy practice to learn and can be safely taught to everyone. It has no side effects and requires no equipment.

How can yoga nidra change the mental behavoiur?

The mind of the twentieth century is an entirely different mind to that of the first century. Today the mind believes in democracy and freedom. It doesn't want to be ordered or controlled. Therefore, when the mind becomes angry you cannot correct it by terrorizing yourself, for when you punish your mind, you are punishing your best friend. The

mind is the greatest force in man and you must learn to deal with it using great care. If you oppress the natural flow of your mind, you will go crazy and your personality will be stifled. Whatever you do in life, whether you are a swami, a businessman or a doctor, you will not be successful.

The great men in the world are made by awakening certain mental faculties inherent in each and every being. This does not happen to everyone, because man does not know how to manage his mind. He does not know how to cultivate or discipline the mind. Suppressing the mind is not discipline. Only by transforming the basic structure of the mind can you change your personality overnight and the practice of yoga nidra is the secret key. I will give you an example with a short but true story:

About twelve years ago while in New York, I was invited by the State Prison authorities to teach yoga to about six hundred prisoners in one of their jails. When I arrived there and saw the pandemonium in the hall, I thought that I had made a terrible mistake, because I was among people behaving like animals, completely out of control, jumping, playing, shouting and yelling at each other. I was among ghosts. They didn't know who I was. When I told them I was a swami, a monk, from India, they all laughed, "We don't know monks; we only know monkeys." They were not interested in yoga, they only wanted to know about my dhotis, shaven head and such things.

I had gone there to teach them asanas, but because they were so unmanageable I asked their monitor to just tell them to lay down flat on their backs and listen to my instructions. I said to myself, "When they close their eyes, I will leave the jail immediately." However, even when they were lying down, they continued to kick each other. So, on the microphone I just kept on repeating two sentences over and over again, "Please close your eyes and don't move your body."

After half an hour, when I realized that my instructions were not working, I slowly got up and left the jail. I had decided not to continue with the classes, but the next day

when I phoned the authorities to cancel my program, they begged me to return, “Swamiji, today the prisoners were quieter, they have not watched television. They lined up for their meals peacefully and have gone straight to bed without fighting.”

The next day when I went there, they were already lying down waiting to begin. When I asked everybody to stand up for surya namaskara they objected, “No Swamiji, we want the same yoga that you taught us yesterday.” For fifteen days I taught them yoga nidra and on the last day they held a farewell meeting to thank me and present me with a gift and my return ticket. On the first day one man had given me a cigarette, but on this day he came to me and said, “You are a holy man and I am sorry that I offered you a cigarette.”

During those few days a great change occurred in the awareness of the prisoners. Prison authorities confirmed that their behaviour and attitude had been transformed. They sang kirtans with me, learned asanas, and even invited me to stay in their jail. I said, “My karma is for fifteen days only, and having worked out my karma I am leaving.”

Can you tell us some of your experiences teaching yoga?

As a swami I have had the opportunity of teaching some of the biggest company executives of the world, including the directors and managers of Hindustan Steel, BHEL, BCCL, Tata Iron and Steel, Telco and many more. Before one of the meetings at Hindustan Lever, the director general approached me for some advice. Whenever they had a meeting of the board of directors, it would end up with bitter fighting and dissension amongst the members. I said to the director general, “Take me to your meeting and I will show you how to manage them.”

Before they started I asked them to extinguish their cigarettes and put down their drinks. We sat down around the table with backs straight and eyes closed, and then chanted Om together a number of times. After this short

practice I left. Later they told me that they had the first meeting in their experience where vital decisions were made without any bitterness at the end. They all agreed it was a valuable method to help them handle the affairs of business management more efficiently.

Although sannyasa belongs to a religious tradition, the yoga which I preach is a scientific system. Yoga has to be taught not as a sect or an institution, but as a science. However, please understand that the purpose is not to preach a science but to teach yoga for the happiness and fulfilment of mankind in general. Just as Lord Vishnu reposes on Ananta, the serpent king, in eternal yoga nidra, guiding the devas and devis, we must also learn to manage ourselves amidst the difficulties of life and at the same time expand the mind from its limitations in the outside world, to the wealth of knowledge within.



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Yoga and Evolution

Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Hyderabad, 24 March 1979

Out of his darkness and ignorance, man is beginning to realize for himself that there is another reality beyond the one we have been taught about and which we experience at present. People are becoming disillusioned about what politics have contributed in the past towards the happiness of humankind. They are very much aware of the failures in social set-ups and political ideologies. All efforts that have been made in the past have only scratched the upper surface of human existence. Through the ancient and scientific system of yoga, we can discover the deeper and illuminating nature of the mind.

Can yoga help to transform the personality?

Yoga has a solution for the problems and failures of mankind. The therapeutic aspects of yoga cannot be denied nor can the spiritual and mystical aspects be ignored. What appears to be the most important and immediate concern of yoga, however, is the basic and fundamental structure of man which has remained untouched even to this day. It is in this sense that I have found yoga to be a transforming agent, a transforming reality. For centuries and centuries religions have been talking about morality and ethics. People have accepted this with sincerity and honesty, but it has remained intellectual, and intellect cannot solve man's problems.

Man has tried to practise morality and ethics but always under compulsion. The righteousness, virtue, goodness and magnanimity that we know today are not an expression of our inner nature and they never were. They have more or less remained with us as social or moral qualities. If I am truthful, it is because I should be. Transformation has not taken place. People have never tried to change their basic structure. They have only tried to brainwash the intellect, to instill morality and create an intellectual philosophy, but that is not enough.

This is how we stand today and how we have been standing throughout history. We may have a civilized philosophy and intellect, but what are we? Within our inner spirit we must analyze ourselves. Yoga has to be used as an instrument for total transformation of the individual, and I have never found any other philosophy or spiritual system that can really and totally transform the structure of man as absolutely as yoga can.

Yoga does not make a man good on an intellectual or emotional plane. It completely overhauls the totality of his personality, the nucleus of his existence. You can change the religion of a man but this does not change his nature. This is the difficult change which mankind has failed to achieve. It is for this purpose that dharma, religions and philosophies were created. To change the nature of an individual can take millions and millions of years by the natural process of evolution. The purpose of yoga is to initiate a movement of transformation so that the individual makes a departure from his innate nature.

Man knows what is good and what is bad and how to live a virtuous life. However, apart from this, what is the basic structure of his thinking, reactions, psychosis and complexes? These are aspects of personality which tell what you are. Migraine, psychosis, asthma, tumour, pain in the body, are reflections of the personality. These disorders are not born of the body; they arise due to a complication in the nature and personality.

Many people come to me prepared to lay down their religion at my feet. However, I say, “No,” not because of any sense of discrimination, but because I know it can be dangerous. Religion, dharma and philosophy are ideas. An idea is a content of the mind. It is your conviction, a part of your personality, and when you add another idea it creates conflict. This is why many people who have departed from their innate philosophy and personality have faced mental, psychological and emotional crisis.

What we have to do is to initiate the evolutionary and progressive factors in man’s life. In Patanjali’s *Yoga Sutras* it says that if you want to bring about a change in someone, you have to fulfil certain conditions within him. A dog, for example, cannot become a man right away because there is too big a gap between its evolution and ours. Nevertheless, if those conditions through which the dog progressed and became an animal can be fulfilled, it can definitely become a human being also in time. It has to undergo a complete transformation in nature in the same way as wood is reduced to ashes when it is put into the fire.

Fundamental change is brought about from within the individual. The potential always exists, but it is clouded over by *avidya*, ignorance. It is this change from *avidya* to higher knowledge which may take many births. Only by removing the obstacle in the way of this change, can transformation take place. One’s true inner reality can only be revealed by removing the impurities from the path of pure consciousness through sincere and regular practice of yogic sadhana. It is in this particular context that yoga comes to us.

What effect do asanas have on us?

The main body of yoga is formed by asanas, pranayama and dhyana yoga. First comes the practice of asana. Although asanas are used as an effective therapeutic system for the alleviation of many illnesses, they have not been properly understood. The main purpose of asanas is to stimulate the psychic centres of the body. Their influence is of a psychic

and spiritual nature, not a physical one. When you practise *yogasana* you are creating a mild awakening in the chakras.

This initiates an act of evolution in your spiritual and mental life, because chakras form a connection or link between your physical and spiritual existence. They are part of *kundalini yoga* as taught in the *tantra shastras*. The six chakras are psychic centres which progressively awaken as man evolves from his gross level of understanding to a higher form of knowledge. It is believed that there are also lower chakras which the individual being or *jiva* has passed through during his incarnations from his animal existence.

Now, however, the evolution of consciousness begins from *mooladhara* to *swadhisthana*, *manipura*, *anahata*, *vishuddhi* and *ajna*. These chakras represent the psycho-spiritual evolution of man. When there is slight awakening in them, it means your individual evolution is moving slightly forward. With a dramatic awakening in the chakras, your consciousness is rapidly and forcefully accelerated on the path of evolution. I want to make it perfectly clear to everyone that *asanas* are not just physical exercises. They are immediately responsible for the growth of your personality and the basic structure of your mind.

Can one awaken kundalini through the practices of pranayama?

Many people have written in books that through the practices of *pranayama*, you inhale more oxygen in order to keep the lungs working efficiently. This may be true, but it is not necessary to practise *pranayama* for this purpose. Deep breathing is enough. The *rishis* and *munis* did not design *pranayama* for the sake of supplying extra oxygen. The purpose of *pranayama* is to extend *prana shakti* into different phases of human existence. It is one of the most powerful tools available for the awakening of *sushumna nadi* or *kundalini shakti*.

There are thousands of billions of cells in the brain which function in a chaotic order without any discipline or

unity. These are shown as random brainwave activity when measured on an EEG machine. How are you going to blend them together into one pulsating unit? These cells are important because they transmit nervous energy or shakti. They are the bindu shakti, om shakti, manas shakti and chitta shakti. They comprise the totality of your brainwave activity. When the basic elements of your brain are moving in a chaotic fashion, your thinking process will do the same.

Pranayama has a solution for this problem. You cannot discipline or organize your physical brain or bring order into the chaotic elements without first awakening kundalini. Our brain is controlled by the chakras and nadis. The three most important nadis are ida, pingala and sushumna. Unless you are able to create a balance between ida and pingala nadis through the practices of hatha yoga, including pranayama, it is not possible to create a balance within the mind. The practices of pranayama are of major importance because they help to first purify and then balance the flows of ida and pingala nadis, thereby awakening sushumna nadi and kundalini.

The third important practice is dhyana yoga which incorporates yoga nidra into its practices. Dhyana does not mean the tranquillity of the senses, that is *pratyahara*, nor does it mean *shoonyata* or unconsciousness. *Dhyana* means an expanded state of mind and awakening of one's full creative potential. When you switch off your mind, you are not practising dhyana yoga. In meditation you do not switch off the light. On the contrary, you make it more luminous. You extend this light further into the mind.

At the present time the light of your mind is aware of external manifestation perceived through the five senses, but in addition to this, you must become aware of the mental forces, psychic forms, different impulses, colour and music, the higher experiences inherent in man. Do not discard these inner happenings as unreal. The experience of the objective world, the outer world, is incomplete without the inner experience. With this inner awakening the experience of the external and internal worlds complement each other.

If the practices of dhyana yoga were introduced into the educational system and into our own personal program, we would have a society based on truth, not hypocrisy; a society which is one in thought, speech and action, and not a society of double standards.

What other yogic practices can help our evolution?

To accelerate this process of awakening, combine the practices of pranayama, bandha and mantra. This is a complete practice within itself. There are some forms of dhyana yoga which may sometimes induce hypnosis if practised for too long by themselves. Pranayama prevents one from sliding into this state of hypnosis. It will not allow the mind to become distracted. When most people practise dhyana yoga, their mind continues to wander and think about daily activities, loves, passions, and so on. You may continue to bring it back, but again and again it goes out. When pranayama is combined with the practices of dhyana yoga, this wandering tendency of the mind is overcome. The processes of pranayama still the mind and make it more one-pointed.

The power of pranayama is further enhanced when practised with bandhas. Pranayama consists of *pooraka*, *kumbhaka* and *rechaka*; inhalation, retention and exhalation respectively. Only in kumbhaka should you perform the bandhas. Pooraka and rechaka must be properly timed with the mantra in the ratio 1:2. This ratio is most conducive to relaxation of the coronary system. Adjust your mantra according to the ratio. For beginners, if pooraka is the length of one mantra, then rechaka must be two mantras, and kumbhaka one mantra.

Anuloma viloma is another important pranayama. Learn it from an experienced teacher and practise it for a few days without mantra or bandha. When you have mastered it correctly, sit down quietly and repeat your mantra, Gayatri, *Om*, *Om Namah Shivaya* or any other suitable mantra. Fix the number of repetitions according to the ratio you have chosen and practise five rounds only.

There is one simple practice called moolabandha which you should incorporate into pranayama. Sit in siddhasana and press your perineum with your right heel placing the left heel at the root of your urinary organ. Then lock both feet by pulling up the toes. In this position you are applying pressure to mooladhara chakra, a small granthi or gland situated between the urinary and excretory doors. Contraction of this gland is known as moolabandha.

This powerful gland is the generator of prana or the seat of shakti. When a tiny atom is disintegrated by a process of fission, nuclear energy explodes forth. In the same way, prana is arrested in mooladhara chakra which is so powerful that if you can control and activate it, you can explode kundalini which immediately shoots up through sushumna.

This is not mythology or fiction. It has been seen with the most sophisticated and computerized instruments. If you think this is not true, I will give you one story to illustrate the power of moolabandha.

Years ago, one lady came to me when I was staying in New York. During the night she rang me and said, "I want to die, but first I want to meet you." So I told her, "Okay you can come, but there is no point in meeting me and then dying, because I am a man who gives life. I won't allow you to die. If you want to die, please don't come to me."

The next morning she came and I taught her *mahabandha*: moolabandha combined with jalandhara and uddiyana bandhas. She practised in siddha yoni asana, because mooladhara in the female body is situated in the area of the cervix. She practised moolabandha regularly, up to twenty times every day, and by this simple technique she got new life. When she first came to me, she was suffering from so much conflict and guilt that she wanted to commit suicide. Now she is very much alive and has become one of my assets, teaching yoga to many others.

How long should we practise asana for daily?

When anyone asks me for a program of yogic practices, I don't give them a long list which takes forty-five minutes or one hour to complete. For a beginner, yoga means just ten to fifteen minutes daily. This is based on certain objective researches which have been carried out. One single asana, shashankasana or sarvangasana, is enough. When people suffering from heart disease ask me what to do, they think that I am going to give them a complicated practice of twenty asanas, fifteen pranayamas, thirteen mudras, fourteen kriyas, and so on, but I just teach them one asana called vipareeta karani mudra. Each asana, each pranayama is a complete unit capable of hitting the disease so hard that ten minutes practice of it is enough.

Just as you don't increase your food, it is also not necessary to increase your practices. When you don't increase half a chapatti every month, what is the point of increasing half a minute of yoga every month. Five rounds means five rounds. Do you take a bath ten times a day or eat food the whole day? No. Two meals a day gives you enough energy for all your activities. In the same way, practise yoga for a short time in the morning and evening and it will keep you balanced and consistent throughout the day. Too much yoga too quickly means increasing your will beyond its capacity. If you try too hard you will only become exhausted and frustrated. Yoga is not a game of table tennis or cards.

How much time should we give each day to the practice of mantra?

In 1943 my guru, Swami Sivananda, gave me a mantra and told me to practise five malas every day. At that early stage I was not aware of the importance of malas and mantras, but some of my guru brothers explained to me, "Because Gurujī has told you to practise these five malas daily, you must do it." So, I began and I think the practice took me no longer than three minutes in all.

Meanwhile I started reading books on many different philosophies and I began to think that God did not exist and that everything in this life was false. I started to wonder about the mantra, whether it was only humbug, and I wanted to renounce it in favour of atheism. These were five very critical years of my life when my mind was always at a boiling point. I had to fight between my intellectualism, emotions, passions, spirit, guru, god, culture and tradition.

I thought I would either go mad or destroy everything, but with my guru's guidance I continued to practise five malas regularly every day and during this period the most important link in my life was formed in those three minutes. Had I renounced my link with the mantra, I would never have achieved the position that I have today. These five malas saved me so that today I stand firmly as a swami, holding the torch of a spiritual culture.

I am not a man or a woman, a brahmin or a kshatriya, a Bihari or a beggar. I am mantra, moolabandha, jalandhara bandha and uddiyana bandha. So, take ten minutes of your daily life and practise yoga. What can you lose in this short time? During your practice forget your money, your relationships, your work and your telephone. These ten minutes every day makes three hundred minutes every month, three thousand six hundred minutes every year. If you lose your health, the doctor will send you to the hospital for fifteen days. These ten minutes a day is the premium you pay for your spiritual happiness.

All over the world people are spending millions of dollars on yogic research into the mind and body because they know that it has the master key for mankind's evolution, to help him move out of his present state of limitation and misery. Ultimately, the practices of yoga must be accepted on an international level, or the people of today will stand as unevolved and ignorant in the eyes of history. Not you but your children will realize the ultimate knowledge and depth of experience that can be gained through the practices of yoga.

Yoga for the Township

*Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd., (BHEL), Hyderabad,
25 March 1979*

I am going to introduce a subject which is of great use in our daily life. In this country, in the past, yoga was considered to be important from the point of view of individual discipline as well as spiritual illumination. Right from the vedic period in Indian history, people believed that the individual mind and body must be kept under proper control. It was immaterial if a government existed or not, or if a law existed or not. The most important thing that was necessary for happiness and for social welfare was individual discipline, *anushasanam*.

Therefore, for those who wanted spiritual enlightenment and for those who wanted to be master of the mind and body, the philosophy of yoga was expounded. Lord Shiva is known as Yogeeshwara, Lord of the yogis, Sri Krishna is known as Yogeshwara, Lord of yoga, and besides these we have Yogi Gorakhnath, Rishi Gheranda and many other mahatmas, saints and yogis. Unfortunately, however, yoga came to be associated with renunciation or abnegation of life, and gradually the people of this country, the intellectuals as well as others, became disinterested in yoga. This is because the purpose of yoga is misunderstood and is interpreted as a life of inactivity. The purpose of yoga is to contribute *shakti*

or energy to an individual who is toiling in life, who is facing the hard realities of life.

Is there a need for yoga training in India?

The time has come again when there is a resurgence of yoga all over the world, particularly in our country, and people are beginning to feel the need to practise yoga. In western countries there are many yoga schools and studios. The young people come to India and learn for a few months or years under some teacher and when they go back, they open their own yoga schools where asanas, pranayama, hatha yoga and many other systems are taught.

In this vast country of sixty crores people, we need thousands of yoga teachers, but our young people and adults do not even know how to do the basic pranayama or how to sit in padmasana or siddhasana. Now we have great faith and belief in yoga because the westerners have taken it up. Naturally it is a matter of great pride and enthusiasm that they have taken to yoga, but if you think about it for yourself, you will find that you too have a lot of questions about yoga.

Why is padmasana practised and what is its place in day-to-day life? If you are not interested in nirvritti marga but you are interested in pravritti marga, if you are a man of the world, what have asanas and pranayama to do with your life? These and many other questions have to be settled. If people are to gain a proper understanding about yoga, the proper guidance has to be provided and the right type of literature has to be circulated.

A lot of research has been done all over the world, perhaps not so extensively, but it can give us a guideline as to the effects of yoga practices on the different parts of the body, the effects of meditation on the nervous system, the effects of asanas on the endocrine system and the influence of concentration on the brain frequencies. This has already been accomplished and the results which have been gained are inspiring, interesting and encouraging. In this respect,

therefore, we have to make some kind of arrangement in every city, town and village, so that yoga teaching can be provided for the young people and our elders.

Does yoga believe there is a connection between disease and the mind?

Today we are suffering from all kinds of diseases, both mental and physical. Even when we have a physical malady, we suffer mentally. The doctor can help us to get rid of the physical malady, but what about the effect which has already gone deep into the subconscious mind? If you have gastric ulcer, it is a physical manifestation for the time being, but the moment you know you are suffering from gastric ulcer, the psyche is affected immediately.

Now you are suffering in two ways, mentally as well as physically. The doctor gives you some kind of prescription which deals with the physical disease, but what happens to the influence, the fear, the anxiety that has been caused by the gastric ulcer in your mind? Therefore, it is necessary that the right type of therapy be introduced for those ailments that originate from the depth of human life.

Disease is born of the human mind. This is not the contention of yoga only, modern science also says this. Ninety percent of all diseases are psychosomatic in nature. The common man may not believe it, but it is the truth. Migraine, asthma, gastric ulcer and other physical maladies originate from the depths of the human mind and this is the contention of hatha yoga.

Why is it important to balance the nadis?

There are 72,000 nadis through which the energy in the body flows. People who are working in this electrical company can understand how the energy flows through different channels. There are physical channels and non-physical channels. When you send laser rays, you do not pass them through a wire. There are electrical impulses which can be thrown without a gross physical medium. There

are electrical impulses which have to be thrown through conducting mediums like copper and zinc.

Nadi does not mean nerve, but flow. Electricity is a flow, thought is a flow, prana is a flow. Nadis flow through every part of the body. Each and every part of the body is permeated by the two energies, prana shakti and manas shakti. The lower energy which is called *mahaprana* is derived from these two energies. The higher energy is *atma shakti*, the spiritual force. I am talking about the lower energy, the prana shakti and manas shakti. Everywhere in the body, in the nails, nose, hair or moustache, there is both manas shakti and prana shakti, which means that the nadis conduct these twin energies throughout the body.

Usually there is a great imbalance between the two shaktis in the body. When prana shakti is predominant and manas shakti is subservient, you become a terrorist, a murderer or a criminal. You are a headstrong, wicked and reckless man, because prana shakti is predominant and there is no balance with manas shakti. Sometimes manas shakti is predominant and prana shakti is subservient and you become a daydreamer and in practical life you go nowhere.

Manas shakti and prana shakti must work equally. That is hatha yoga. This means that the practices of *neti*, *dhauti*, *asana*, *pranayama*, *mudra* and *bandha*, should not be considered as merely physical exercises like gymnastics. They are subtle exercises by which you are able to influence the bioplasma or prana shakti in the body. It is not a muscle-building scheme like sports. It is a scheme by which you are tackling the physiological basis of the non-physiological faculties in man. Prana is a non-physical faculty. Thought is a non-physical faculty. They have a physiological base, the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous system, otherwise known as *ida nadi* and *pingala nadi*.

That is why *nadi shodhana pranayama* was taught when the sacred thread was ordained to a boy at the age of eight. It was practised five times facing the sun which is the source of prana shakti. Now that tradition has been lost,

because people thought that it was a religious ritual and so they rejected it. Religion in India is entirely different from religions elsewhere. Here every ritual has a scientific basis.

Yoga is not limited to any one system. Just as we have hatha yoga, there are many yogas such as raja yoga, bhakti yoga, kundalini and laya yoga. By the practice of these yogas the individual becomes the master of his non-physical faculties, by tackling the physiological counterparts in the body. Shakti is non-physical, but the chakras are physical and are in the body. If you awaken the chakras by concentration on them, you awaken those faculties which are non-physical in nature.

Can we help to spread the word of yoga?

How are we going to impart the training of yoga to our people? This is a problem which I have always been thinking about. As I told you, yoga is not a physical exercise, so it is not possible that ten thousand people can be made to stand in one row and be told, 'Hands up and hands down'. You need a guru. You need a teacher with whom you learn. Therefore, we have been moving from place to place in this country as well as abroad and establishing small nucleus centres everywhere.

We established one centre at BHEL in Bhopal and it has been successful. The people of the township have gained a lot of knowledge about yoga. We also have another type of permanent establishment called Yoga Mitra Mandal (YMM) where devotees have their constitution, their separate building and their system of teaching. Yoga can be organized like a club is organized by a company. It is only important that the people must know that yoga is something for their benefit.

Somehow it has become our misfortune in this country, that people are ignorant about yoga. They know Swami Vivekananda did so much dynamic work. So many rishis like Yajnavalkya and others have rendered so much service. Vedavyasa edited eighteen Puranas. They turned out so

much work yet still we are not clear in our minds that through the practice of yoga individual efficiency can be brought to a higher level.

Whether you are in administration, an executive engineer, shopkeeper, businessman, housewife, child or student, your mind can be influenced by the practice of yoga. Your individual awareness can be made wider, you can become more aware of the circumstances, more aware within and without. Therefore, we have been establishing small nucleus centres where a few individuals who are interested in learning, spreading and sharing the knowledge of yoga with the people around them, can take part.

Should we accept yoga as a personal way of life?

I must tell you frankly that the people outside of India are very interested in yoga and they hunger for it as much as we hunger for material prosperity and accomplishment. They have been searching for an alternative in their own countries as well as abroad. Young people of sixteen to twenty are totally frustrated. The modern education and material prosperity, the comforts, conveniences and securities, have not made them happy. When they come to yoga they feel that they have arrived at a point of achievement in their lives. This is what our coming generation will have to face.

Yoga is our heritage, we people of India breathe the air, drink the water and live the life of yoga. Yoga is not a religion in the sense that we understand religion. It is a science which can be tested and proven, it is not a matter of faith. For example, if you practise pranayama, it influences your brain and nervous system. Yoga is scientific and a lot of research work has already been done with it in India and abroad.

Since yoga is a science and not a religion, there should be no hesitation in accepting it as a personal way of life. A few pranayamas done every morning with half a dozen asanas and ten or fifteen minutes of concentration or one-

pointedness, *antar mukha vritti* or introversion of the mind, will help so much that you will feel you can depend on your own self rather than constantly looking to others.

Can you please talk about yoga nidra and how it works?

Without speaking about yoga nidra, a talk on yoga is not complete, like rassam without salt, no matter how much tamarind you put into it. Yoga nidra is a practice which was lying dormant in tantra. It is a tantric technique, not a method of hypnotism. The practice of yoga nidra is used for relaxation, for inducing deep sleep, for influencing the subconscious mind, for introducing knowledge into the mind when it is in an unconscious state, and finally for spiritual transcendence.

If one is suffering from insomnia, sleeplessness or *anidra*, yoga nidra can be used. If your little children have bad habits like stuttering or wetting the bed at night, they can be corrected in yoga nidra without their knowledge, by imprinting or impressing one particular idea on their mind. At a particular stage of yoga nidra, you just implant the idea and it works beautifully. If you want to change your wife or your husband, you can do it.

There are many husbands who drink a lot. They are poor husbands with their own problems. Instead of one wife, they have two: the wife is one and wine is the other. Such ladies do all kinds of satyagraha but nothing works. They run away to their mother's home but it does not work. They love, they hate, they beat, but nothing works.

However, yoga nidra can work. In fifteen days the husband can forget about wine and remember the wife, because it is the subconscious mind which has to be controlled and not the intellect. This intellect, *buddhi*, is like a cable that can only reach up to a certain point. Beyond that it cannot conduct your electricity. The intellect is shallow. I know what I should do, but I cannot do it. I know what I should not do, but I cannot help doing it. This is *buddhi* which is shallow and limited. It cannot help you.

It is through the *bhavana* or feelings that knowledge can be passed directly into the bosom of your life. Bhavana goes deep into your being. Buddhi only goes up to a certain extent and not beyond that. It is this bhavana which is tackled in the child, in the husband, and their entire personality is changed. When you awaken the bhavana and implant a seed there, it will work. This is yoga nidra. *Nidra* is sleep and is a form of relaxation, but it is unconscious. *Yoga nidra* is relaxation in which you are conscious and at the same time totally relaxed. Yoga nidra is better understood as a state of relaxation while being aware. We believe that total relaxation can be achieved even while you are awake. When you are deeply asleep and your consciousness is withdrawn into swadhisthana chakra, when the atma is withdrawn into the state of sushupti, you are not necessarily relaxed. In yoga nidra there is a constant influx of awareness. Like waves, the awareness keeps on moving and gradually the *kleshas*, or the causes of suffering in the body, are removed.

Will yoga nidra help to bring out the genius in children?

Those children who want to study and read, but who cannot because they are suffering from a state of duality in the mind, a split, should take to yoga nidra. At a particular stage in yoga nidra they must make the sankalpa which will tune their mind in such a way that they will become terribly interested in their studies. Their whole career can be influenced.

There have been experiments where yoga nidra has been used for speeding up the process of learning. In deep yoga nidra the tape recorder is placed beside the practitioner. In this way the *Bhagavad Gita*, languages or mathematics can be learned, by listening to the tape recorder in yoga nidra. In ten or fifteen days you will learn what would normally take six months.

I tried this with a few people and succeeded. Of course, I do not have time to teach everybody myself, but I suggest that you and your family members help each other to

practise. In this way you can create geniuses out of each other. Your husband can give you yoga nidra one night and you can give him yoga nidra the next. By the practice of yoga nidra, you can give each other a lot of knowledge, good ideas and nice experiences.

Every family must become a master of yoga nidra. Attend yoga nidra classes consciously and see how they are given. Take down notes on how the relaxation is done through the physical body, the pranic body, the mental body, the psychic body. Learn what is said and how many times it is repeated. When you go home, continue that tradition in your family, and in a few weeks time your family will become a spiritual fraternity. The atmosphere of the whole family will be charged with happiness, bliss and spiritual zeal.

This is the purpose for which I have come to your township and if what I have said happens here, I will feel that I have been a good farmer and you have been very good soil.



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Yogic Engineering

*Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd., (BHEL), Hyderabad,
26 March 1979*

I first started introducing yoga to engineers and executives in Germany where I conducted a seminar for the managers and directors of Levers, a big company. From this you can understand how important yoga is for all of us. Yoga does need reintroduction in this country where many people have wrong notions about yoga, yogis and sannyasis. This reintroduction to yoga has become necessary in the light of social and environmental changes.

About half a century ago our society was in a different state. Now we are entering into an era of scientific revolution or evolution, where our brains, nervous systems, glandular secretions, emotional responses and digestive functions, have to readjust with the new stresses and strains of the industrial civilization. We cannot escape from the destiny to which our nation and our society is committed, but we can definitely readjust the whole inner structure of our body to meet the changing environmental demands.

Fifty years ago our ancestors were living in agricultural settlements on small or large farms, with relatively little stress and strain. Today, however, when you have to ride on a bicycle through the streets of Hyderabad, you must be alert every second. Every moment there is stress and strain.

Therefore, you can understand exactly what we are going through. In these times when the whole pattern of society is changing rapidly, yoga has a great contribution to make and it has already contributed a great deal to the modern man of the West.

Do you believe yoga will improve society as a whole?

We use the word yoga in the sense of harmony, coordination, equilibrium and synthesis, which has to take place inside, between the body, mind and prana. When there is no such harmony we fall ill. The illness is either mental or physical, but ultimately it leads to social illness. By yoga I do not mean renunciation, an act of escapism or a funny way of thinking and responding to the natural urges of life.

Right from the earliest period, more than fifteen to twenty thousand years ago in this country, up to this day, the word yoga has always been used in the sense of evolution of the human mind. The evolution of humanity is an important factor with which society, civilization and history is immediately concerned. If your mind is evolving, you are creating a better society. If it is otherwise, you are creating a society of terrorism and disbelief.

Therefore, in order to have a greater society, you need to have a greater mind. You have to evolve the mind as a whole, but how does the mind evolve and what is the mind? When you say the mind, do you mean a thought? Do you mean the emotions? Do you mean the nature of man, the *swabhava*? What exactly does the word mind indicate? Even in modern psychology the mind has not been properly defined. Although psychologists have done a lot of research on the functions and the nature of the mind, still something remains to be said, and that has been said in yoga.

Unless you influence your mind, you are not going to become intuitive engineers. In the mind there is a faculty of intelligence. This faculty is creative and at the same time destructive. Static intelligence, creative intelligence and destructive intelligence are responsible for our mental

states. However, we want our minds to evolve into the form of creative intelligence, so that every moment we become creative with our job, with our instruments or with our businesses. It is in this sense that yoga has to be reintroduced.

What yogic practices can bring greater awareness to mankind?

If you are interested in spiritual life, I personally feel that before starting on the path where you are only concerned with the higher reality and God, first you will have to take care of your body and your mind. The body is the vehicle, the mind is the driver and the atman is the indweller of the body. When the vehicle and the driver are not functioning in the right order, everything goes wrong everywhere.

The particular yogas which bring order into the mental and physical functions, are classified as raja yoga and hatha yoga. When I speak about *raja yoga*, I mean the practices of yoga which concern your conscious, subconscious and unconscious mind; your *chitta vritti*, the patterns of your consciousness. This is what is meant by raja yoga.

While listening to my speech, at the same time, you are aware that you are aware of this fact. You are aware of the time, of the place. You are aware of the event and you are aware of this awareness, which is a privilege of man. This awareness has to be developed so that it can become broader and wider. The greater the awareness, the more potential there is for the accomplishments.

People whose awareness is narrow are fools. People with cosmic awareness, with wider awareness, can function in the realm of society, in the realm of religion, in the realm of crime, because every activity, every intention, every accomplishment needs the potentiality of the human mind. If the mind is not aware, a thief will be caught before he gets into your house, because he has not kept all the things which could happen in mind. When you are dealing with a machine or a plant, you have to be intuitively aware of all the things

that the machine needs, that the plant needs, and the fact that anything that can happen at anytime. That is the subject of awareness.

Can you explain the process of raja yoga?

In raja yoga we take the mind as a substance, as matter. The mind is matter. In science you take matter, divide it and render it into particles, which are called molecules, atoms, protons, electrons. The mind is also comprised of elements and there are ninety-six in all. Thought is not the definition of the mind, it is one aspect of the mind. Feeling is not the mind, it is an aspect of the mind. The mind is a scientific matter. It is a substance constituted of various elements.

Just as in science or physics, you take matter and define it in terms of ninety-six elements or ninety-seven elements by dividing it. Likewise, the mind can also be divided. The ultimate form of the mind is *shakti*, energy. Just as the ultimate form of matter is energy. When the mind is divided and refined shakti flows from the mind.

In between the gross or the crude state of mind and the final or ultimate state of mind, a lot of products and by-products are received. You can receive the finest memory or know how to handle a situation at the right moment with firmness and will, total patience and equilibrium. These are some of the finest products of the mind during the process of refinement.

In the practice of raja yoga we try to make the mind fine and this is done through the practice of meditation. In the practice of meditation you maintain the awareness of one object. If the awareness of that object is intercepted or interceded by any other thought pattern, you negate it. This process of negation is something like the process of breaking down or disintegration in science. This is raja yoga.

Can hatha yoga bring total health?

Hatha yoga is a combination of asanas, pranayamas, mudras, bandhas and shatkarmas. By the practice of hatha

yoga we try to purify the physiological counterpart of the psychological system. Both the pranas and the mind are brought into a state of equilibrium. In this system there are many asanas which definitely treat some of the constitutional and chronic diseases like asthma, epilepsy, gout, rheumatism and piles. It can also help you to set right all disorders that crop up from the malfunctioning of the endocrine system.

The endocrine glands secrete a small amount of hormone directly into the bloodstream. Although these secretions are very small, only about a quarter of a teaspoon of hormonal secretion is absorbed by the body in a period of forty to fifty years, these secretions are important. They maintain the physical homeostasis and they control such emotions as anxiety, fear, passion, ambition, courage, confidence and willpower.

If you are timid, suffering from an inferiority complex, lacking in willpower, anxiety ridden, or if you suffer from horrible dreams at night, it means that your endocrine system is malfunctioning. The secretions of the thyroid, the pancreas, the adrenals and the gonads are important in the formation of your emotional personality. Unfortunately, however, most people do not understand this.

In modern medical science there are medicines, therapies and qualified doctors, but we are not taught how to maintain the health of the endocrine glands. To give you one example, in the brain there is an important gland called the pituitary. From this gland as many as twenty-two hormones are secreted. Most of these hormones help to control the human personality.

If your pituitary is healthy, the hormone secretions will be balanced. However, if the pituitary is unhealthy and its functions are suppressed, the secretions will be irregular, uncontrolled and unbalanced. You will have bad dreams, night emissions or loss of vitality. If you are married, you will have sexual fears and impotency.

At the same time, you may have negative ideas about your boss for no reason. He may have nothing in his mind

about you, but you are thinking so many things about him. If there is something in his mind, how can you know for sure whether he has a sense of appreciation for you or some prejudices against you. All this is due to an imbalance of the hormones which consequently influence the body and mind. Therefore, in yoga, sirshasana is considered to be one of the best asanas because it controls the hormonal activities of the pituitary. I am not asking you to start practising sirshasana from tomorrow morning, but keep this in mind.

When the pancreas does not produce enough insulin, one suffers from diabetes. Insulin is a product of the pancreas. If the pancreas is suppressed, one suffers from diabetes. In yoga we believe that all the glands are controlled by the master gland, the pituitary. The master gland is in turn controlled by the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous system. If the nervous system is suppressed by fear, anxiety, passion, stress, strain, or by other emotional problems people face today, the parasympathetic nervous system can become blocked.

Once the parasympathetic nervous system is blocked, the impulses do not travel through it. Naturally the pancreas does not produce enough insulin because the connection with the parasympathetic nerves is not functioning. If you do certain practices like paschimottanasana or *yoga nidra*, the psychic relaxation, the parasympathetic block will be released and the nervous connection will be revived. You will find that you do not have any diabetes at all. This is hatha yoga; it is not a miracle.

Can you tell us about the applications of yoga internationally?

Much can be said about hatha yoga and raja yoga. Hundreds of books have been written. In the West they are working on this. In Switzerland there are many clinics where yoga is used to help patients break bad habits like chain smoking and drinking, especially in the event of cancer. Doctors have advised these patients not to smoke or drink, but they are

so addicted they cannot stop, they are sent to special clinics which up to now were operating without any success. When they introduced yoga, however, they had fantastic success. This is because yoga transforms the nature of the mind, the swabhava and the samskara.

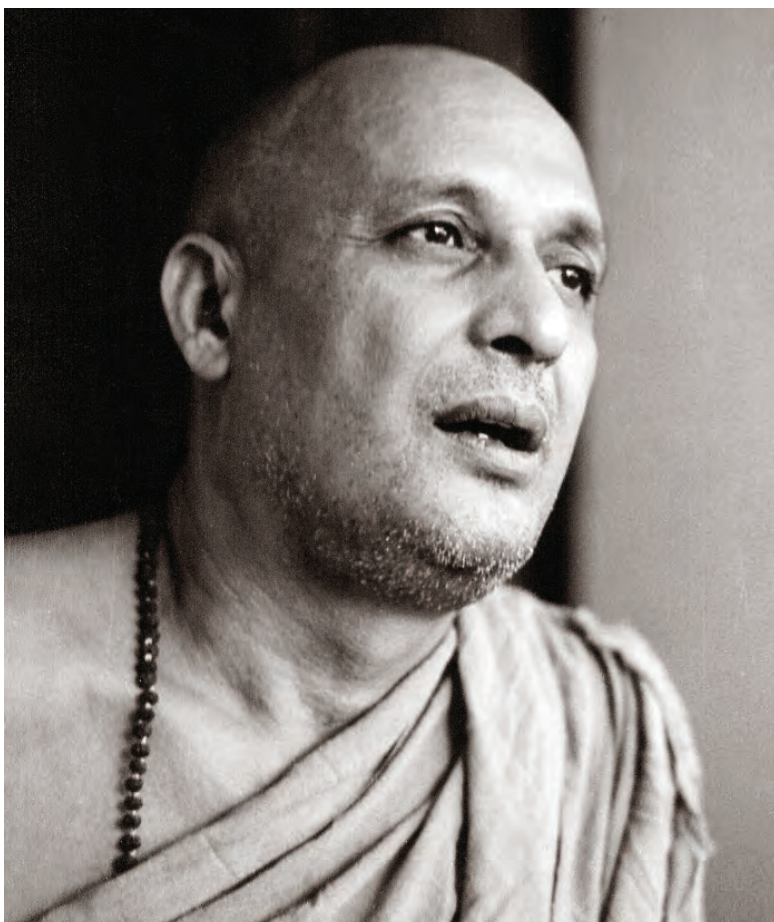
In Scandinavian countries, Norway, Sweden and Denmark, where crime and suicide are at the highest peak and where prosperity is also at the highest peak, the mental hospitals are always full of patients. Young boys and girls just lose their balance. One of their gears goes out of order. They stay in the mental hospital for years and years. Some of them even grow old there. They have no way to live life. A few years ago yoga came to their country and it has helped them. Now yoga teachers are appointed in the mental hospitals and classes are held. The inmates practise neti and dhauti, asana, pranayama and kirtan and bhajan, because singing is important. They have experienced good results thereby.

From these two instances you can understand that yoga is an international culture. It transcends the barriers of religion, caste and creed, whether it is in Europe or Africa, Arabia or Russia, South East Asia or South America. Everywhere you find yoga is spreading like wildfire. The people in every country have become beneficiaries of yoga. In schools and colleges yoga is accepted as a subject.

If you are affiliated to different religious denominations, do not worry. Yoga cannot spoil, corrupt or negatively influence your religious personality. There are many things in society today which have negatively influenced your religious personality. If you are Hindu, Muslim, Christian or Jew, yoga will only help you. It will make a positive contribution to your religious enlightenment. If you are a Vaishnaiva, Shaiva or Shakta, a Vedantin, bhakta, an agnostic or atheist, if you are dedicated to social service or service to your family, in every case yoga is going to contribute positively to your personal life.

Yoga adds beauty to the human personality. Whether you stay here or go outside this establishment, you will

need the benefits of yoga. As you are trained to run boilers, turbines, switchgears, likewise you should become the master technicians of your body and mind. Yoga is going to make you another type of engineer. So far you have been engineers of the material electricity. After practising yoga you are going to become the engineers of this entire plant. These heavy electricals can only be properly managed and controlled by the engineers who have been trained in yoga.



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The Origin of Disease

Bank of India, Nagpur, 27 March 1979

Yoga is not a new word to you, although you may have your own ideas about it. I have only one idea, which I have learnt from my experiences, which is that yoga can be scientifically proven. Just because yoga belongs to an old culture does not mean that it is out of date. Likewise anything that is new cannot be considered as absolute. The tendency to accept what is new and to reject what is old is a changing cultural attitude. It has not always existed. Both modern psychology and medical science have a definite part to play in the scheme of life, but at the same time, these sciences have major limitations in relation to the times that are ahead. Problems confronting nations and communities of the world, mental disorders and the physical diseases that are cropping up, will sooner or later be out of the zone of medical science and psychiatry.

Even today it has become evident in western countries where medicine, although it has made tremendous progress, still has not been able to alleviate the sufferings of people, because the diseases are changing and in some cases they are unknown. There was a time when diseases originated from the person's physical nature or body, but today whether it is diabetes or blood pressure, peptic ulcer or rheumatism, spondylitis or constipation, the point of origin

is the human mind, the human nature and its individuality, not any external factor. The whole theory of the origin and pathogenesis of disease is going to have to change within two or three centuries. Not you, but the next generation will know the exact place of yoga in relation to their daily life.

I have been working in the field of research for over twenty years now and the more deeply we investigate, the more we come to realize that the science of yoga has to be taught on a national level. In western countries yoga is being taught in sanatoriums, jails, mental hospitals and educational institutions. However, in India we have failed to introduce the idea of yoga even to those people who call themselves intellectuals. I travel all over India with a definite purpose, that yoga should be introduced into the scheme of national life. The West has realized and accepted that through yoga, people can escape from the tempest. Today yoga has to be integrated into the fabric of resurgent India.

What is the yogic view on the cause of disease?

Any imbalance in our physical and mental life results not only in physical and mental sickness but also disease on a social and national level. Through the practices of yoga this imbalance must be harmonized. In yoga physical life is known as *prana* and mental life as *chitta*. Prana is responsible for the *karmendriyas* or motor nerves. Chitta is responsible for the function of the *jnanendriyas* or sensory nervous system. Imbalance between the sensory and motor nerves in the body is a major cause of disease.

According to modern science, the sensory and motor nerves are controlled by the parasympathetic and sympathetic nervous systems, which are related to *ida* and *pingala* nadis in yogic terminology. *Ida nadi* is *chitta* which is responsible for mental functions. *Pingala nadi* is *prana* which is responsible for life and movement. Without *prana* the individual is considered dead. Similarly, when there is no mind there is no awareness, no concept of time, space and object, nothing. In modern science *prana* is known as

bioplasma. In modern psychology chitta is known as the mind which encompasses the waking, dreaming and sleeping states. It is also known as consciousness or *chetana*.

Chitta is not a psychological aspect of the mind. It is as real as electromagnetic or radioactive forces. It is as real as the laser beam but even more subtle in nature. The mind is not emotion, thought, passion, pain or pleasure. These are only different formations of the mind. They are not the mind itself. They are the ripples on the surface of the water. The mind is a force and every force has a field, including electromagnetic forces, and so on. When chitta is throwing out impulses from the mind like electric vibrations, they can travel hundreds and thousands of miles within a second.

One research conducted in Russia about five years ago tested the ability of two individuals to transmit and receive each others thoughts. Each time they conditioned themselves to the practice and succeeded in transmitting and receiving thought waves, the distance between them was increased until eventually they were separated by a distance of 1,600 miles and were still able to transmit and receive messages. Finally they were placed in a Faradays cage and lowered onto the seabed. It is a large cage where radioactive or electromagnetic waves cannot penetrate. The researchers found that the thoughts could penetrate the walls of this cage and they continued to transmit and receive their messages.

The mind is a force, it is not an idea. Just as electricity is a force and can be conducted for thousands of miles, so it is with chitta. When chitta becomes distracted, it becomes weak. The voltage goes down and you are not able to maintain strength of mind. When the tendencies and waves of the mind are made one-pointed by the practices of dhyaana yoga and raja yoga, it creates its own field. When this happens, the mind becomes powerful and efficient in action.

Prana is not the air which you inhale. The air which you breathe from outside has ionic forces. These are not prana. You are born with a certain quantum of prana and it is on that prana that you are living now. You must learn how to

conserve prana, how to charge your pranic batteries. If you continue to waste it, disease will definitely live within you. When the pranas become weak, a man falls ill. This is the central theory of yoga. Disease, illness and imbalance do not come from outside. They are within you.

How do asanas and pranayama affect the body and mind?

Prana and chitta, the mental and life-forces, have to be balanced through the practices of yoga. First comes the practice of yogasanas which are of major importance. These yogic postures create certain effects and influences throughout the nervous system, endocrinal system and psychic centres of the body. For example, if you are overweight and practice paschimottanasana, do not think that by movement of your waist, thighs, stomach, you are accelerating the metabolism of fat. Paschimottanasana balances the hormonal secretions which produce a balance in the metabolic functions of the body. This is how weight reduction occurs.

Asanas are not just physical exercises for alleviating your diabetes, high blood pressure, asthma, and so on. They have become the centre of a vast amount of research carried out in the last twenty to thirty years. One of the most outstanding results was made by a team of scientists in Poland investigating the effects of sirshasana on the human body. After recording changes in blood pressure, respiratory rates and the electrical activity of muscles, they concluded that sirshasana is one of the most powerful and effective of all asanas. It brings about a change in the structure of the brain, lowers the rate of respiration and increases the amount of oxygen absorbed by the tissues. It gives ample rest to the heart by inducing a state of relaxation as well as improving the blood circulation throughout the body.

The practices of pranayama are intended to awaken the sleeping centres of the brain. At present man uses approximately one tenth of his total brain power. From this limited capacity he has produced geniuses in mathematics,

physics and other areas. Nine-tenths of the brain's potential remains untapped. There are twenty-four thousand billion cells in the brain that we know of. Each cell is a unit, is one life. However, these billions of cells are not working in an organized manner. If we could integrate their movement and activity, all parts of the brain could be used.

Scientific research on the brain has shown that just as a country is controlled by a central government, so the whole physical body is controlled by the brain. The heart, nervous system, respiratory system, kidneys and bladder, are controlled by the brain. The heart, nervous system and excretory system are controlled by the hypothalamus in the brain. The practice of pranayama helps in streamlining the activities of the brain cells and awakening man's full creative potential. Mantra and three bandhas can be added to accelerate the process.

Is it necessary to balance prana and chitta before a higher experience of yoga happens?

Side by side with the other forms of knowledge which you are receiving through your work and studies, you should also make a serious practical study of this great science of yoga which has been cruelly ignored and forgotten. If you do this, your heirs will give you the best of compliments. In the twentieth century it is not the physical body or the mental faculties but the spirit which is gaining importance. Otherwise, nations will continue to wage wars and violence will continue to take place as no law can control the inner nature of man.

Man is not only composed of flesh and blood, matter and bones. He has a mind which is capable of producing geniuses, saints and sages; a mind which is total and absolute. Man is composed of prana, which is capable of bringing forth life. When the pranas and the mind are brought into a state of balance through the practices of asana, pranayama, yoga nidra and meditation, the higher yoga unfolds within you, whether you realize it or not.

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Message to Parents

Bihar School of Yoga, Sivanandashram, Munger, 1 April 1979

Swamiji, what is your advice to parents? How can we give our children a good start in life?

As a small child I used to spend hours building things with wooden blocks. My parents often watched me from a distance and my father would say, “I will make my son an engineer.” But my mother always interrupted, “No, he will become a great leader.” I was like an unbaked clay pot and my parents were like the potmakers, trying to shape my personality, my life, in their own way. My father often said, “Study your arithmetic, try to analyze things. You have to become an engineer.” While my mother said, “Take an active part in debate, practise delivering lectures like your uncle.”

However, I could never understand their advice. I always felt a mysterious power in nature. Everyday flowers bloomed and faded, the sun rose and set. I used to wonder who was controlling these events, who was the monitor. Finally, I approached my parents with this question, but my father only replied, “No one has succeeded in solving this mystery, so don’t think about it.” My mother said, “Don’t be silly. You have to acquire money, name and fame. Think about these things.” I made no further enquiries.

The aspirations of my parents were blocking the path of my life at each step and unconsciously I began to liberate

myself from the blockade. By chance I got a few books by Swami Vivekananda which I read and I chose my path. "I will become a man", I thought, "and not a leader, engineer or scientist." I was determined not to copy anyone, neither my father nor my mother, Jawaharlal Nehru nor Swami Vivekananda. I decided not to flatter anybody or tell lies for my own gain. To speak the truth is always risky, but I did so. If I made a mistake I admitted it. Soon I became intolerable company and my friends began to reject me. A few sympathized and advised me to adjust, but I was determined to be myself and inside I grew stronger and stronger every day.

Today my personality has become an amalgamation of so many ideas but still I have remained true to myself. In doing so I have managed to preserve and evolve the inner vision of a more powerful self which has always given me inspiration and direction.

I request that parents, teachers and social workers try and understand their children and allow them to grow up without losing their original purity, spontaneity and creativity. A child with an aptitude for the arts would not be forced to become a doctor or a scientist. Let him develop and express himself according to his natural abilities. Guide each child carefully. Help him to recognize his special talents and qualities. Watch and analyze his tendencies and inclinations and encourage him to choose the path of his own interest.

Let us be living models of what we want our children to become, otherwise all is hypocrisy. We often complain that children do not obey us, but is it not us who have taught them to indulge, show off and tell lies. Let us think over their problems like a psychologist and as their spiritual guardians show them a higher and simpler way of life.

Kriya Yoga and Psychic Symbol

*Bihar School of Yoga, Sivanandashram, Munger,
12 December 1979*

Can you talk about tantra and kriya yoga?

Right from the beginning, man has been confronted with so many dazzling experiences which have occurred in his mind, and from that time he has been trying to understand the rhythms of life, of his mind and inner experiences. He has also observed various other creatures, birds and animals, and compared his own state of mind with theirs.

How does a man think? Why is there a difference in the states of mind and the experiences? Is the mind a link in the great chain of evolution or is it something else? In other words, does our present state of consciousness have any link with the past or future? Man has witnessed psychic experiences and many amazing mental feats. He has also experienced various states of mind from idiocy to dynamism, clairvoyance and intuition. What are all these states and why do we experience them?

In society man noticed that some individuals have brilliant minds or prophetic minds, while others have limitations of the mind. So naturally he wanted to know how to develop a higher mind. Even today, if you hear about a good boxer, a brilliant musician, actor or actress, or a beautiful woman, you want to know how they became

like that. In the same way, when man began to observe the different faculties, expressions and manifestations of a greater mind, naturally he wanted to know how to achieve that.

In different countries, numerous people gave explanations for an evolved state of mind. Some said that a divine being had been conceived, therefore, he was born with a fantastic mind. Others said it was due to being possessed by a spirit. A spirit had entered him and spoken through him. Others said that God had descended and was speaking through him. Various definitions were expounded by people from time to time, but they definitely could not get the acceptance of the intellectuals and thinkers.

From ancient times the people in India contemplated the question: What is the basis of man's evolution of consciousness? For this purpose the sages and thinkers kept on exploring different explanations. It is in this tradition of exploration that they came across a certain set of practices known as tantric practices. They used the word *tantra* not in the context that we understand it today, but in a different context altogether.

Many modern people believe that *tantra* is just a form of practice which involves the use of the five *tattwas*. These elements are reflections of the people's personality and culture. Actually *tantra* just means two processes, expansion of mind and liberation of consciousness. The practice to expand the mind and consciousness is *tantra* and the practice which ultimately leads to the release of the energy is also *tantra*.

Expansion of mind means the capacity of the mind to experience beyond the limitations of the senses. The eyes can see objects and the ears can hear sounds. These are called sensory experiences. It is the mind which sees and hears. It is through the mind that all kinds of sensory perceptions are taking place. The eyes and the ears are the sensory mediums. For the sensorial experience, the mind is limited to the capacity of the eyes and ears. The mind, however, can experience what the eyes cannot see.

If the mind can experience what the eyes cannot see, if you can smell something which is not there, if you can think something which is beyond the realm of logic, that is called the expanded experience of the mind. This is one important aspect of tantra.

Expansion of mind clearly means experiencing something which the senses are not able to provide. These experiences are in the form of yantras, mandalas and sounds. When you can hear even without the sound being produced that is expanded awareness. When this inner experience takes place irrespective of the senses, what happens later is that a greater experience begins to take place. This is called release or emancipation of energy, the awakening of kundalini.

The word emancipation should not be understood in the religious sense. Hindus call it moksha, Buddhists call it nirvana and Christians call it salvation. These are religious terms. I am referring clearly to emancipation of energy in a purely scientific sense, not in a religious sense. When you take matter and split it, energy is released.

This liberated energy is explained in physics. If you take milk and churn it, butter is released. I am trying to explain the exact meaning of emancipation. At the root of matter is energy. Behind and at the base of all matter is energy. In fact, matter is a gross manifestation of energy. Ultimately, matter at one stage becomes energy and energy at one point becomes matter.

A thought is matter, an experience is matter. It is a base and it has a basis. You have to go behind the thought. You have to go behind the experience, and you have to go behind every experience of existence. Gradually you go on negating every experience, 'Not this, not this, not this'. You go on negating and what remains at the end is nothing.

Tantra means the expansion of mind and the liberation of energy. Within the science of tantra, a system known as kriya yoga evolved. The practices of kriya yoga are referred to in various tantric scriptures. Even the practices of hatha

yoga are supplementary to those of kriya yoga. Although hatha yoga is now being used in the East and West for purification of the body, these practices ultimately have a different objective.

Therapy is not the purpose of hatha yoga. Therapy is a by-product of the hatha yoga practices. The main purpose of hatha yoga is to bring about a union of the two forces within the body. If there is no harmony between prana and the mind, the awakening of kundalini or of consciousness will not take place. By the combination of asana, pranayama, mudra and bandha in the kriya yoga practices, we can ultimately awaken a state of harmony within the body and accelerate the pace of evolution.

How can we extend the tongue for the perfection of khechari mudra?

The right time to start the practice of khechari is when you are under twenty-five years of age. After this age it takes more time. When you turn your tongue back against the upper palate, it slowly becomes elongated. The lions pose, *simhasana*, is also helpful. When you are brushing your teeth in the morning, project your tongue and rub it with a little butter. Many Indians do this every morning, using three fingers to rub the butter in.

If you are under twenty-five years of age, you can cut the root of the tongue. It can be cut with the hard leaf of a tree or rubbed with a piece of crystal. As you rub it, in the course of a few months, the tongue becomes elongated. It should not bleed. If you take less salt, the tongue will become more flexible, as salt hardens the membranes.

If you only rub the frenum of the tongue, it is not dangerous, but if you cut it, it is dangerous. A good surgeon can do it, because he knows the right nerve to cut. Some times when children have a speech impediment, they do surgery to correct it. However, once the tongue has been cut, it cannot be joined again. You have to rub and milk the tongue. It takes two or three years, not just one or two months.

There are three stages in this practice. One is creating friction, two is cleaning the tongue from the top, and three is milking the tongue. This has to be done slowly, because if you milk the tongue for too long you will get pain and if you cut it with a sharp blade it may become septic. The best way is to rub it with a piece of crystal which should not be too sharp.

When the tongue becomes elastic, it can enter the nasal orifice. First this produces a saline taste which later can become bitter like quinine. If it starts creating a bitter taste, you must stop khechari. This means that your body is not purified, but if you get a sweet taste, it is alright. This sweet taste creates an intoxicated mood that helps in meditation.

When the practice is perfected, the tongue can come up through the nasal orifice to the eyebrow centre. When it touches this point, you feel a very cold sensation. At this point *kevala kumbhaka* takes place, the breath automatically stops. The yogis who enter underground samadhi have mastered khechari. They take the tongue up behind the eyebrow centre and press it there. Then they see an inner light, there is complete illumination. The breath stops and the heart stops. There is only consciousness.

These yogis remain underground for as long as the light is there. The moment they feel that the light is vanishing, they come out of khechari and the breath and the heart begin once again. If, by chance, the yogi does not come out, he will die. It means that the *prana*, the life-force, is there as long as the light is there, but once the light disappears, life goes.

Most of them know how long they can retain the light. There was a yogi who could retain the light for forty days. He went underground, but after ten days he lost it. He tried to come out but the vault was cemented shut. Nobody heard him or saw him, so he died there. This was an important samadhi taken by a yogi in West India in the 19th century. At that time a sick king, Maharaja Ranjeet Singh, was ruling the kingdom. This incident has been reported in many books in the West.

Therefore, it is said that one should try to maintain the light at the eyebrow centre. That means your life-force is concentrated there. In yogic texts it is written that one who can maintain illumination in the eyebrow centre will be able to die according to his choice.

What is the psychic symbol?

The psychic symbol is the basis for the awakening of the psychic dimension of the mind. It can be anything, for example, the flame of a candle, a tiny star or a triangle. If the flame of a candle is your psychic symbol, it means that this symbol is going to be the medium of awakening the psychic dimension of your personality.

The psychic dimension is the level where archetypes are stored. The external sensory objects, sounds, forms, tastes or anything, have a different form in the psychic body. These forms are known as archetypes. Every sound has an archetype. It is a type of program, just as you have a program in a computer, likewise there is an internal programming and it has different symbols.

I have been speaking to you in English which is a combination of alphabetical letters which you have learned in school, but the way your psychic mind receives it is a completely different affair. Perhaps it is received in the form of geometrical shapes or maybe some kind of electronic charges. The external sound or form does not manifest in the same way in the brain.

When your child learns ABCD or 1, 2, 3, 4, multiplication and division, within these permutations there are inner symbols. These archetypes are often seen in angular shapes, triangles, squares and other geometrical forms. The psychic symbol is the basis for the awakening of the psychic body. These archetypes which have been suppressed in your being have to be expressed, to be revealed, so that you can see them in order to know your deep inner nature.

Everybody has his own psychic symbol. It means that only through your psychic symbol will you be able to open

the lock of the psychic body. Perhaps if you concentrate on the flame of a candle or on a star, it will not work, but if you concentrate on a triangle or on a circle, it might work. It may start exploding your unconscious and you may see different forms, different colours, or you may hear different sounds. These are the archetypes.

How does one find one's psychic symbol?

Some people find their symbol by virtue of their intuition. Otherwise, it is necessary to consult a guru who can help you to find your psychic symbol.



Kriya Yoga Tradition in India

*Bihar School of Yoga, Sivanandashram, Munger,
13 December 1979*

Can you tell us about the history of yoga?

The practices of yoga have been handed down by the great teachers in different times, in different countries, to different people. The saints and priests in Islam, in Zoroastrianism, in the ancient Aztec and Incan civilizations, were aware of the yoga practices. In India there were and still are many direct traditions for the teaching of tantra and yoga. Even today, teachers in India and Tibet continue to teach these sciences to their disciples.

In other parts of the world, however, the tradition of yoga was completely annihilated by a succession of political accidents. We have read in history about the great massacres and disasters that took place in many of the Latin American countries where hundreds of thousands of people belonging to this ancient tradition were completely annihilated by foreign invaders.

Today we respect many great Christian saints and apostles of the middle ages, but if you read about their lives and history, you will learn how they were tortured during their lifetimes. During that period, the great saints, whether men or women, were destroyed by demonical political forces. That is how the traditions were completely

destroyed until the people did not even know what tantra and yoga were.

In India, however, it was different. The gurus were protected by the people at any cost, not only by those with political power, the kings and emperors, but by everybody. Even the poor people who were illiterate and starving understood the important role of the guru in the spiritual evolution of mankind. During the period when the whole country was in turmoil and it was feared that the spiritual traditions would be lost completely, the Indian people decided that the spiritual teachers must be given a place of refuge.

Therefore, for centuries, certain places in the peaks of the Himalayas were reserved just for gurus and swamis. In these areas the usual political and social traditions were reversed. Even if the king himself wanted to go there, he had to behave as an ordinary human being and not as an emperor or a king. These gurus were free to study, make further discoveries and teach and preach throughout the country.

Can you speak about the different lineages and traditions we have in India?

The traditions continued and one of these traditions was that of the Nath gurus. The first of these gurus was Matsyendranath and his disciple Gorakhnath, after whom Matsyendrasana and Gorakshasana are named. The head of the Nath lineage is Adinath or Lord Shiva, the greatest of yogis. According to the story, Lord Shiva was instructing Parvati about the secret practices of yoga. At this time they happened to be standing on the seashore and a large fish overheard all the instructions. From this fish, the all knowing Matsyendranath was born.

Gorakhnath was the disciple of Matsyendranath and there are many stories concerning his birth. It was said that when Matsyendranath was begging for food, he met a woman who asked him to bless her with a son. He gave the woman some sacred ash and told her to eat it and she would obtain a son. However, the woman had no faith and she did

not eat the ash but cast it on a heap of cow-dung. Twelve years later Matsyendranath passed through the same village in order to see the child. The woman told him that she had thrown the ash away and so he asked her to show him the exact spot. There he called out the name Gorakhnath and immediately a radiant twelve year old boy emerged from the pile of cow-dung.

Gorakhnath became the disciple of Matsyendranath and later the first expounder of hatha yoga and the founder of the Nath sect. There were nine gurus in this tradition and they were highly esteemed for their accomplishment in yoga and the attainment of many siddhis. The Nath lineage is still alive today in India, but their main centre is in Nepal.

In the fifteenth century another tradition originated from a humble man known as Kabir. Nobody knows who his parents were. A Muslim weaver had found him as a newly born baby in the corner of the village street. Possibly a high born lady gave birth to the baby and out of social shame she left it there without anybody's knowledge. The Muslim family brought up the boy. He was totally illiterate and worked as a weaver. He composed wonderful songs and you can hear about the kriyas in these songs.

Kabir had a great influence on the poor and ordinary people. You can find his ashrams all over India, but mostly in the areas where poor people live. If you see these people, you will think they know nothing about yoga and tantra, but if you converse with them, you will be surprised to find that they know everything. They sing songs every evening containing the descriptions of all the practices of kriya yoga.

A third spiritual tradition began in Punjab under a guru called Nanak. He was the son of a great officer in the Muslim empire. When he became enlightened, he travelled all over India and the Middle East. He was the only non-Muslim to enter into the Kaaba, the holiest mosque in Mecca. When he went to Mecca, he was an old man. One evening he was lying down sleeping and some Muslims came and kicked

him. They said, “You heathen! You are sleeping with your feet towards the Kaaba. Don’t you know that it is the house of God?” He replied, “I am very old and tired. Please turn my feet to which ever side God is not.” They tried, but each time they changed his position, they found the Kaaba also changed its position.

In the books of Islam there is a reference to Guru Nanak. He started a tradition of ten gurus. One of the ten gurus ultimately formed a group called the *Sikhs*, which means disciples. In Sanskrit it is *shishya* and its local pronunciation is ‘sikh’. Their scripture is called *Guru Granth Sahib*. This is also one of the most important traditions of yoga, but unfortunately they do not practise it. Every morning they sing a song called *Sukhman Sahib* which is a hymn on sushumna nadi. They sing about nectar, ambrosia and amrita, but they do not do any other practices.

Then there is another tradition which comes from Sri Yukteshwar, Paramahansa Yogananda’s guru, who learned kriya yoga from the mythical Babaji. This tradition began in Rajaket, thirty miles away from my birthplace. Fifty years ago it was wild there and even in the daytime you could see tigers. In this area there were a great many caves with sadhus and swamis living in them. This particular part of the country is famous for its association with swamis. The people are poor, because they live in the mountains, but they would sacrifice anything for a swami.

Swami Vivekananda has a mission in the same district. He loved the people of this place so much that he always visited there whenever he returned from foreign countries. The people there are untainted, the forests are virgin green, and there are many caves, but not everybody can live there. If you need anything in life, you cannot stay there. Only when you say, “I don’t need anything: not food, not doctors, not medicine, not money or clothing,” then you can live there. You must be able to say, “I don’t even need to live.” This is the place where Babaji lived and where Sri Yukteshwar learned kriya yoga.

In 1967, two French ladies came to stay with me. One of them is back in France now and is known as Swami Devatmananda, but the other lady is dead. Both of them stayed with me for one year and then they took a pilgrimage to this place of Babaji's with their movie and slide cameras. They knew very little English, but they decided to take this arduous journey. They were there for two months running from one cave to another, hoping for a vision of Babaji.

One night they had a clear vision of Babaji who said, "With which eyes did you search for me? And whose body are you going to see? All bodies are mine. The physical, mental, emotional and spiritual bodies are all my bodies. When you see me in a dream that is also my body. Now that you have seen me, go back." The two ladies returned and were very happy. Swami Devatmananda told me, "Now, my friend has no wish to live anymore, because she has achieved the summum bonum of her life." The friend went back to Paris and died.

There is no end to the history of yoga. Of course, in the different traditions you have a little variation in the practices, but it is not major. Our tradition of yoga is the most ancient in India and was revived in the eighth century by the first Shankaracharya.

Shankara was born in the southern part of India. At the age of six he renounced his family, at sixteen he started teaching, and at thirty-six he left his mortal body. He died twice and there is a beautiful story about it.

In the province Narmada where Shankaracharya was preaching, lived Mandan Mishra, a great scholar and master of vedic religion. He was married to a woman named Bharati. The scholar did not agree with Shankaracharya's philosophy and said, "Who is right, you or me, and who is going to be the judge?" Shankaracharya said, "Your wife can be the judge." So his wife brought them both a garland and said, "Whoever's garland fades first is the loser."

They had great discussions on philosophy, traditions and classics. After a few days Mishra's garland began to fade.

His wife declared, “My husband has lost, however, you have only defeated half, because in the Hindu tradition husband and wife make one not two.” So, Bharati invited Shankara to debate. She was a brilliant woman and for many days there were discussions. Yet she could not defeat him either. Finally she started asking him questions on the kama shastras, the Hindu science of sex.

That became a problem for Shankaracharya. If he answered the questions he would not appear as a *brahmachari*, a celibate, and if he did not reply, he would lose. He said, “Well, let me come after some time and give you a reply.” Then he entered the body of a dead king. When people found that the body was still alive, it was brought back from the burial ground to the palace. In that body he lived together with the queen for a period of time while his own body was being taken care of by his disciples.

Eventually the people of the kingdom began to wonder at his strange behaviour as he was behaving more like a sannyasin than a king. They consulted some of the wise men who said, “It is not the king, but some other person who has entered his body.” Soon the disciples of Shankaracharya learned that the soldiers were searching for a dead body and they invoked their guru back into his body. Shankaracharya went to Bharati, debated with her on the kama shastras and defeated her soundly.

The tradition of Shankaracharya has two main branches. One is Vedanta and the other is tantra. In our tradition you can find swamis belonging to both the vedantic tradition and the tantric tradition. Vedanta means *jnana yoga*, the yoga of contemplation, reflection and total absorption in the reality of the absolute. No asanas, pranayama, mudra or bandha, just sitting down and asking, “Who is Brahman?”

The other tradition is tantra, where you have to do a lot of practices. I have opted for tantra and many others have opted for Vedanta. I, therefore, believe that the aim of tantra and yoga is to accelerate the evolution of consciousness beyond the laws of nature.

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Mantra and Yantra

*Bihar School of Yoga, Sivanandashram, Munger,
24 December 1979*

Is mantra a religious practice?

Many people think that mantra is the name of a god or goddess, but *mantra* is sound energy. The sound can be vibrated within and without this physical body. A sound has waves. Some can be heard and felt while others cannot. If you chant a mantra, the resonant waves of the sound can be made to travel up and down the spine many times, creating an order of awakening in the nerves. It is not a myth because investigations have shown that during the practice of mantra the brainwaves change from beta to alpha to theta, which means that sound has an influence on the brain waves. Sound influences the inner structure of the body and the homogeneous mind. In order to awaken and remove the energy blocks in human life, mantras have to be used. This is not a religious matter, but a scientific fact which has undergone investigation.

What are the different ways of obtaining and using a mantra?

Mantra is a symbol of the unconscious which is inherent in the personality of everyone. Mantra is the form of *nada*, the primeval sound or basis of the whole creation. Even in the

ancient books it is written that 'in the beginning was the word'. In the individual form the word is the mantra and in the cosmic form it is the nada. Mantra exists on two levels, cosmic and individual.

In tantra there are many kinds of mantras, so before seeking a mantra, it is important to know what you want it for. If you are undergoing some problem in life, the mantra which you employ to get rid of the problem will be a temporary one, not your personal mantra. When the problem subsides, the mantra will be of no further use to you. On the other hand, if you are trying to awaken the kundalini or psychic powers, you must have the correct personal mantra accordingly.

There are two types of mantras: *bija* or seed mantras of one syllable, and mantras of more than one syllable. Bija mantras are powerful and are used mainly for spiritual purposes to awaken the kundalini or the chakras, for psychic communication or averting some kind of trouble in life. Every chakra has a bija mantra, for example, *lam*, *vam*, *ram*, *yam*, *ham*. People who are devoted to different forms of gods and goddesses also use their names as mantras. They have faith in a great power and develop love or attachment for a particular deity like Shiva or Kali who represent that force. There was an English professor in India who was in love with Lord Krishna and he used to repeat only his name as a mantra.

According to the tantric tradition, initiation into mantra is given either by the guru, one's mother or revelation. A mantra received either in a deep dream or through intuitive inspiration, which you constantly feel a strong attraction for, may also be taken as your personal mantra. At the time of initiation, several important points are explained to the aspirant: firstly, the necessity of keeping the mantra secret; secondly, the importance and practical implication of the mantra; thirdly, the nature of the mantra and how it forms the basis of the relationship between guru and disciple, and finally, the purpose of the mantra.

Your mantra is absolutely personal and must be kept secret. When you keep the mantra secret, it becomes more powerful. This is true with everything. A seed will grow in the earth, covered by soil, but it will never grow on a table, uncovered and exposed. Whenever I give a mantra I whisper it quietly and tell the person who is receiving it to please keep it personal. The purpose of the mantra is to render the mental plane clear and the mind still so that you can go inside directly and become internalized. Once this purpose has been fulfilled, you can talk about your mantra or pass over it as you like.

Mantras for spiritual evolution must be practised for a set amount of time every day. If the mantra is repeated too much, it will affect the whole system. Those who are psychic, sensitive, unstable or subject to hallucinations may not be prepared for that at all. I have a rule for myself, never more than ten minutes. If you repeat the mantra regularly for ten minutes daily, within a few days you will know if you are oversensitive and whether the mantra is impressing your mind to a larger or lesser extent.

Mantra repetition should not create tension in the mind. The mind becomes tense if there are conflicts present due to various mental obstructions. To avoid mental tension, do not try to concentrate while practising mantra. Simply repeat the mantra as you would spontaneously carry on a conversation. If you talk and try to concentrate on how you are talking and what you are saying, tension will be created.

When the mind is distracted, you should never try to concentrate. In raja yoga, concentration is known as *dharana*, and it can only come once *pratyahara* or sense withdrawal has been achieved. When the mind is extroverted and distracted, you cannot come face to face with it without creating conflict and tension. However, by simply repeating the mantra without trying to concentrate the mind, there will be no tension. The purpose of mantra repetition is not to develop concentration but to withdraw the senses and still the mind.

Practise mantra repetition every day for ten minutes. During this time you may think anything you like, but you must become introverted and maintain your awareness while repeating. This is why a mala is used. The mala keeps the mind in motion so that you do not become unconscious and fall asleep. If you repeat *Om Namah Shivaya*, *Om Namah Shivaya*, and become lost in that, you will enter the unconscious state and sleep. However, with the mala, the mind may become introvert but awareness is maintained for every time you come back to the starting bead, which is called the *sumeru*, you have to turn the mala. This keeps the mind sufficiently extrovert to maintain the awareness.

Everyone who has a mantra should remember this important point. During mantra repetition, do not fight the mind. You should think of the mind as your best friend. If you misbehave with the mind, it will give you many problems. The mind is a magician. In one minute it can create neurosis, in another minute hallucinations, nervous breakdown, phobia, and the desire to commit suicide. In the *Bhagavad Gita* (6:6) it says the mind is your friend and also your enemy. If you learn to observe and control the mind, it will become your best friend, but if you have no understanding or control over the mind, it will be your worst enemy.

Are all mantras to be kept secret or only those given by the guru?

The tantric mantras, the bija mantras and the mantras which are given by your guru for the accomplishment of a particular act, must be kept secret. You should not divulge them even to your father, mother, wife or husband or child. Some mantras are bhakti mantras like *Om Namah Shivaya*, *Hare Rama Hare Krishna*. If you want to tell them to anyone it does not matter, because they purify your mind when you chant them and they give harmony and peace to those who hear them.

The tantric mantras and the mantras that cure snake bite, scorpion bite, jaundice and other things, are not to be

told to anyone, and not only that, after you have finished the required number of malas, you must forget it. They are not written on paper. The science of mantra is complicated, but in general, please do not divulge the sound, the *shabda*, of your mantra to anyone.

While reciting mantra, what changes take place in the practitioner?

The mantras are a combination of varna and akshara. The word *akshara* literally means imperishable and every akshara has a varna. *Varna* means colour. You may have read the book by Sir John Woodroffe, *Garland of Letters – Akshara Mala*. These akshara or imperishable letters have colour, frequency and a particular element as the presiding deity. They also have form and this is important. I know this because I give mantra to illiterate devotees sometimes.

If I tell you to recite *Om Namah Shivaya*, you cannot go any further, because you have certain ideas about it. You have a literary base for understanding, whether it is Hindi, English, Gujarati or Urdu. You can only imagine it on the basis of that. You cannot hear it as a pure sound, because of your intellectual block. However, an illiterate person has no intellectual conditioning. He does not know the form of *Aum*. I know it, but he does not. Therefore, he hears the pure sound.

Every sound has a form, a colour, a frequency and length. Even the musicians do not know this. We are not able to see the true form because we cannot throw off the literal form which we have given to each sound syllable. When you practise the mantra, you are repeating the combination of a few letters: *A-I-M*, *H-R-E-E-M*. *K-R-E-E-M*, for instance. When you combine the letters together, the effect is on the basis of the literal content of those letters. *A-U-M* has three sounds, *NA-MAH-SHI-VAY-A* has five sounds, *RA-MA* has two sounds. Some mantras have five sounds, some seven, some eight or nine.

When these sounds are combined, the effect is like throwing a pebble into a still pond. From the point where

the pebble falls, ripples spread out in a wider and wider circular pattern. If you take four pebbles and throw them, you create ripples, but if you throw a rock instead of a pebble, it will create waves. In the same way, the mind is like an ocean, an ocean of consciousness, *chetana sagara* as we call it. If you throw a sound like *Aum* into that consciousness, it immediately creates vibrations and these are known to us as sound waves.

Sometimes the effect is temporary, but if you reflect on it again and again, you can maintain the continuity of the waves. These waves go deeper and influence other levels of the mind. The mind has different levels. You call them conscious, subconscious and unconscious. In yoga we call them *sthula*, *sukshma* and *karana*, the gross mind, the subtle or astral mind, and the causal mind.

The different depths of your consciousness are affected by the sound. If the mantra is chanted at night, it goes very deep, influencing the subconscious and unconscious dimensions. If the mantra is practised in the morning, it affects the external areas of the mind, that is, the conscious mind. So, this is how we explain the effects of mantra on the mind and on the entire personality.

What is the significance of yantra in tantra?

In former times, the tantric tradition was the basis of every kind of knowledge. Nowadays, this knowledge remains encoded in the symbols of tantra. Only recently have scientists been able to discover that the human mind possesses its own archetypes in endless forms and symbols, and that the understanding of language and perception depends on what is already contained in the universal mind.

The human brain consists of billions of archetypes, which are symbols of man's experiences from this incarnation and previous incarnations, from his fathers and forefathers. Every experience we perceive through the senses is registered with the consciousness, not in its original form, but in the

symbolic form of an archetype. No experience is ever lost or left unregistered by the human consciousness.

There is a constant process of registration, transformation and storage, right from the time of birth up to the point of death, nothing we experience through our senses is destroyed. Even experiences in sleep, dream, deep hypnosis and complete unconsciousness, take a symbolic form somewhere in the physical, mental or causal bodies. They are known as *samskaras*, the different patterns of man's karma. These billions of *samskaras* find their expression in this life of pain and pleasure, fulfilment and failure, sickness and health.

Yantra is the science of geometric symbols, and these symbols can release the archetypes and *samskaras* which are deeply embedded in the consciousness, either in the form of visions, psychic experiences, dissipation or turbulence of the mind. By unburdening the mind and soul, the practice of yantra liberates the potential energy in man.

Yantra is an important aspect of tantra for it is a means of awakening the unconscious. The word yantra is derived from two Sanskrit roots, *yan* meaning 'to hold' and *tra* 'to liberate'. Yantra is a tool for holding and concentrating the awareness so that meditation is induced. An aspirant becomes qualified for yantra sadhana at a particular stage of his spiritual journey. Yantra is the symbol of a higher cosmic force. It may be engraved in some type of metal, drawn on paper, or shaped from some other material. These forms are not hypothetical, suppositional or imaginary. They are archetypes.

In the tantric system there are archetypes like Sri Yantra, Swastika Yantra, Kali Yantra and many others. At one time all civilizations had yantras. When these symbols are presented to the mind at different times, they go deep into the consciousness and produce explosions. These are creative explosions, just as when you put the seed into the earth and several days later it breaks into two and sprouts, and the tree grows. In the same way, there are different groups of yantras which can stimulate your sattwic, rajasic, and tamasic body.

These yantras can explode and awaken certain creative faculties. You know that the millions of samskaras within the mind of man can never be destroyed, because everyday you are making more. Why not explode the best in you? There is no use in fighting with your lower samskaras, let them remain there. However, there are also higher samskaras which are a reservoir of power and these yantras are instrumental for awakening the great potential in human consciousness. Through this reservoir, beautiful music or inspiring ideals and philosophies can be developed, or you can do great service for humanity. If you can hit upon the best seed, you may even become a prophet. If you can understand this, you understand the science of mantra, yantra and mandala.



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The satsangs of a realized master are a gift that inspires and blesses all who receive his wisdom and grace. During the 1960s and 1970s Swami Satyananda's yoga courses at the Bihar School of Yoga and tours throughout India yielded a wealth of spiritual teachings spanning a vast range of subjects. Renowned for their depth of insight, clarity and compassion, the eternal truths revealed in these satsangs are presented in the *Early Teachings of Swami Satyananda Saraswati* for the upliftment of seekers everywhere.

Early Teachings of Swami Satyananda Saraswati Volume II is a compilation of talks and lectures given between 1962 and 1979. Swami Satyananda discusses a wide range of topics including hatha yoga, meditation, kriya yoga and tantra. He explains how yoga can be applied in education, the world of business and science, to benefit not only the individual but society at large. Swami Satyananda's teachings are characterized by simple language, profound insights, deep intelligence and compassion for humanity.



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